

Public Document Pack



CABINET

Date: Wednesday, 17 September 2025

Time: 3.00pm,

Location: Council Chamber

Contact: Lisa Jerome (01438) 242203

committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: R Henry (Chair), J Thomas (Vice-Chair), M Arceno,
R Broom, C DeFreitas, J Hollywell, T Plater, L Rossati,
S Speller and N Williams

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - CABINET 9 JULY 2025

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 9 July 2025 for signature by the Chair.

Page Nos. 5 - 12

3. MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES

To note the following minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny and Select Committees:

Environment and Economy Select Committee – 11 June 2025

Community Select Committee – 3 July 2025

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 15 July 2025

Page Nos. 13 - 34

4. GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE 2025/26 - 2029/30)

To update Members on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Page Nos. 35 – 80

5. FIRST QUARTER REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2025/26 - GENERAL FUND AND HRA

To update Members on the projected General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital 2025/26 net expenditure and seek approval to amend the General Fund, HRA and Capital budgets as part of the quarterly revenue monitoring review.

Page Nos. 81 - 110

6. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2024/25 AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

To note the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2024/25 and to approve the actual 2024/25 prudential and treasury indicators in this report.

Page Nos. 111 - 130

7. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER ONE 2025/26

To receive a report highlighting the Council's performance across key priorities and projects for Quarter 1 2025/26 and providing an update on progress against current strategic risks.

Page Nos. 131 - 194

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976 – REVOCATION OF TAXI RANK, DANESTRETE, STEVENAGE.

To consider proposals to revoke the taxi rank on Danestrete, Stevenage as required under Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Page Nos. 195 - 220

9. GRENFELL INQUIRY PHASE 2 UPDATE REPORT

To provide an update to Cabinet on the Council's response to the public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire.

Page Nos. 221 - 238

10. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

To consider any Part 1 business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

11. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the

grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

12. PART II MINUTES - CABINET - 9 JULY 2025

To approve as a correct record the Part II section of the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 9 July 2025.

Pages 239 – 240

13. APPROVAL OF CONTRACT AWARD TO DELIVER WARM HOMES: SOCIAL HOUSING FUND WAVE 3 WORKS.

To seek approval for the award of a new contract for the completion of energy efficiency and decarbonisation works to the Council's housing stock.

Pages 241 – 262

14. WRITE OFFS OVER £10K

To consider writing off Council Tax debt deemed irrecoverable which is properly due to the Council and is more than £10,000.

Pages 263 – 268

15. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

NOTE: Links to Part 1 Background Documents are shown on the last page of the individual report, where this is not the case they may be viewed by using the following link to agendas for Cabinet meetings and then opening the agenda for Wednesday, 17 September 2025 –

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>

Agenda Published 9 September 2025

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 9 July 2025

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Richard Henry (Chair), Myla Arceno, Rob Broom, Coleen De Freitas, Jackie Hollywell, Loraine Rossati, Simon Speller and Nigel Williams

Start / End Time: Start Time: 2.00pm
End Time: 3.10pm

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tom Plater.

There were no declarations of interest.

At the juncture, Councillor Richard Henry, Leader of the Council reported on a visit he had made to the brilliant new underpass murals in the Old Town area which had been designed by local school pupils.

2 **MINUTES - CABINET 4 JUNE 2025**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 June 2025 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 **MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES**

Cabinet received an update on the recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which included the Green Spaces Strategy and Tree and Woodland Strategy, Panning Policy Update including Revised Local Development Scheme and Revised Statement of Community Involvement and two Part II items on Pioneering Young STEM Futures and Project Delivery and Principal Contractor for The Oval Development.

Members agreed with the view of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that it was important to recognise and reflect the relationship between the various strategies and plans the Council published.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny and Select Committee held on 10 June 2025 be noted.

4 **OUTTURN Q4 MONITORING REPORT FOR GENERAL FUND, HRA AND CAPITAL**

Cabinet received a report presenting the Council's current financial position across the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Capital Programme, and subsidiary companies.

The General Fund had a final position of £573,000 surplus over the working budget, and the HRA reported a surplus of £341,000.

In addition, the Council's General Fund allocated reserves have increased to £11 million. Despite the reported HRA surplus there still remains financial risk in particular to the HRA with increased costs of repairs so a full HRA Business Plan rewrite is underway to guide strategic financial decisions.

The report also provided financial information on the Council's companies. Queensway LLP was primarily purchased for regeneration purposes, funded by an external developer, with the Council leasing the asset. The LLP reported a £382K operational loss due to on-going commercial challenges and summarised some of the steps being taken. Marshgate Ltd the councils housing company posted a modest profit of £41K. The Council's joint venture with Mace at Swingate was progressing with construction on-site.

Cabinet was advised that a full HRA Business plan review was underway to guide strategic financial decisions.

Members were pleased to see that considerable progress had been made on the build of Claxton House, part of the Joint SG1 Development with Mace.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2024/25 actual General Fund net expenditure of £11.792 million be noted, subject to the 2024/25 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
2. That the 2024/25 actual core resources (government grants, business rates and council tax) of £12.994 million be noted, subject to the 2024/25 audit of the Statement of Accounts (paragraph 4.4).
3. That carry forward/spend requests totalling £262,070 be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.3).
4. That the Transfer to reserves of £1.450 million be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.7.1), subject to the 2024/25 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
5. That the transfer from General Fund reserves to allocated reserves in 2024/25 of £150,000 as detailed in paragraph 4.2.1 (III) and included in the overall additional transfer to reserves as set out in para. 2.1.4 be noted.
6. That the transfer from reserves in 2025/26 from the Transformation reserves (£9,390 para.4.6.8 refers), Town Square reserves (£104,560 para 4.6.1 refers) and transfer to the Elections reserves (£60,000 para 4.6.7 refers) in 2025/26 be approved.

7. That the changes to the 2025/26 as set out in the table in paragraph 4.6 be approved.

5 **HOUSING HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

Cabinet received a report outlining the Council's response to new legal and regulatory requirements addressing housing health and safety hazards, introduced under Awaab's Law. These requirements would be implemented in phases starting October 2025, with the initial focus on damp and mould, and all types of emergency hazards. The Portfolio Holder advised that there would be more phases coming forward in 2026/27 and that it was essential to ensure the Council's Housing Stock was as up to date and safe and warm as possible for tenants.

The portfolio Holder was pleased to report that the Council as a Landlord was in a strong position to manage the phases coming forward through the established Damp and Mould Team but that policies and procedures would be regularly reviewed.

It was noted that a full briefing would be shared with Members detailing to a number of further Government announcements in relation to social housing, such as more funding for Council homes, possible changes to Right to Buy as well as access to funding.

Members welcomed the recent Government announcements regarding more funding for Council homes alongside potential changes to the Right to Buy legislation.

Members thanked the officers involved in the organisation of the recent Decent Homes Programme Open Day which had been held at the Cromwell Hotel at which Members were given the opportunity to meet with contractors and companies involved in the Programme.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the new legal and regulatory requirements in relation to housing health and safety hazards as set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 which are due to be implemented by way of secondary legislation with the initial phase to come into effect from 25 October 2025 be noted.
2. That the planned introduction of new electrical safety standards for the social housing sector in November 2025 be noted.
3. That the work being carried out to ensure compliance with the new requirements in relation to damp, mould and condensation and all types of emergency hazards be endorsed.
4. That it be noted that the Executive Housing Working Group (EHWG) will receive regular updates on compliance with the new housing health and safety legal requirements both prior to and following their introduction in October 2025. These updates will include implications of the planned widening of the scope of the new

legal requirements during 2026 and 2027 and actions required to ensure compliance once known.

5. That the amended Repairs and Maintenance Policy as attached at Appendix 1 be approved.
6. That the Strategic Director (Richard Protheroe) be delegated authority to agree any further minor changes to the Repairs and Maintenance Policy and/or Damp and Mould Policy after consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder.
7. That the potential resourcing implications for the proposed extension of the new legal and regulatory requirements to other Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards in 2026 and 2027 be noted.

6 **Q4 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE 2024/25 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25 AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE 2025/26**

Cabinet received a report providing a comprehensive overview of the Council's performance at the end of the 2024/25 financial year and setting out the proposed direction for the year ahead. The report brought together key performance data, strategic reflections, and forward-looking priorities to support Cabinet in reviewing progress and shaping the next phase of delivery.

The Chief Executive gave a presentation on the Corporate Performance Suite and 2024/25 Annual Report.

Members were advised that the 2024/25 Corporate Performance Suite included 53 measures and over 100 milestones which were aligned to the 5 Making Stevenage Even Better priorities.

The one red target reported related to the residential garage void rate although there had been an improvement from Quarter 3. Economic factors had contributed to the void rate, with the cost of living being cited as one of the main reasons for terminations. Members were advised that Garage services would continue with a proactive marketing strategy including working with local housing associations and issuing surveys to license holders who live outside the town to better understand their needs. Further improvements to the online digital service including a new mapping feature was implemented in April 2025 which had stopped a lot of location queries.

The Chief Executive highlighted a number of key achievements in relation to the ongoing delivery of the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) programme including Transforming our Town, providing More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Housing and Thriving Neighbourhoods priorities, Tackling Climate Change and Balancing the Budget and Equality & Diversity, Technology & Innovation and Health & Wellbeing.

While not reflected in a red performance measure, the Chief Executive advised that performance clinics were being used to look in more depth at the performance of

corporate compliance, the customer service centre and damp and mould.

The Chief Executive then set out a number of key Corporate and Business Unit Priorities for 2024/2025.

Members made the following comments:

- Officers were thanked for the Annual Report which was a clear read and included a large number of pictures which would ensure residents were kept informed of the Council's performance and plans;
- Officers should continue to identify potential windfall housing sites which could benefit local areas;
- The importance of Members using their Climate Change Community Fund should be stressed as there were a lot of schemes that could benefit from the funds;
- Regular monitoring was important and showed the Council's ambitions and improvements in relation to housing;
- There were many other exceptional services running in partnership in Stevenage such as the Equalities Commission and SADA.
- The regeneration programme in the Town showed the ambition and achievements of the Council and partners;
- The social value delivered as part of the new Leisure contract run by Everyone Active was welcomed;
- Thanks were given to the officers involved in recent community events in the Town including the Hertfordshire Dementia Festival held in Fairlands Valley Park and the Barrio Fiesta.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the service performance against 53 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Quarter Four 2024/25 through the Making Stevenage Even Better Programme (Appendix D) be noted.
2. That the challenges with Garage Voids and planned improvements be noted (section 4.2.5).
3. That the strategic risk updates (section 4.6) be noted.
4. That the draft Annual Report 2024/25 (Appendix A) be agreed, subject to any changes discussed at the Cabinet meeting and with final sign off delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council.
5. That the proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2025/26 (Appendix B) and MSEB Priorities 2025/26 (Appendix C) be agreed.

7

FLAT BLOCK RECYCLING IMPROVEMENTS

Cabinet received a report seeking authority to spend some of the allocated £1.078m funding for 2025/6 to deliver new and enhanced initiatives aimed at achieving higher

rates of recycling in Stevenage. This included the introduction of facilities at flat blocks that currently had no/limited on-site provision and/or required building works to enable level access for collection purposes. The introduction of a separate Food Waste Collection was also planned to be implemented by April 2026

Members noted that the report also proposed funding a Project Manager to oversee the implementation of these changes, working with residents to help make this a success.

The Portfolio Holder advised that this was a real opportunity for the Council to increase its recycling rates with the inclusion of 74 flat blocks in the town which currently had no recycling facilities. He thanked the officers for their work on this initiative.

Members welcomed the improvements, particularly highlighting the new 3 wheeled wheelie bins which had been developed by the Team which enabled easier recycling for residents living in flat blocks and suggested that the possibility of a patent for the design should be investigated.

In response to a request, officers agreed to look into the possibility of providing recycling facilities at events held in the Town.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the use of up to £719,000 from EPR funding to deliver recycling improvements to seventy-four flat blocks, to provide the necessary opportunities for residents to recycle plastics, glass, cardboard and food be approved.
2. That up to £199,000 from EPR funding to support the implementation of separate food waste collections to residents, should the funding received for this from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) need to be increased be approved.
3. That an allocation of £52,000 from the EPR funding to fund the SDS waste project manager costs in 25/26 and commits to a subsequent allocation to fund the salary (with any pay increase) in 26/27 (subject to funding), to deliver the legislative requirement for separate weekly food waste collections from residential premises from April 2026, and to support the delivery of the flat block recycling improvements be approved.

8 **HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL RETROFIT STRATEGY**

Cabinet received a report introducing the Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy, a county-wide framework developed collaboratively through the Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (LARA) initiative. It was noted that the strategy aimed to accelerate energy-efficient home retrofitting across Hertfordshire, supporting both social and private housing sectors.

Members noted that an accompanying action plan had been drafted and would be

refined through multi-agency collaboration to ensure a robust and deliverable model, including governance options. It also positioned the Council to benefit from coordinated, long-term retrofit efforts across the county.

Members welcomed the report which showed the Council's commitment to the wider green agenda as well as tackling fuel poverty and making a difference for tenants.

Members were pleased to note that £17.03million had been awarded to retrofit 825 Council homes and that there should be additional Government funding allocated for additional properties to be retrofitted. It was also noted that £1.5million had been secured to help retrofit a smaller number of private properties and Members looked forward to developing the scheme throughout the Town

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the adoption of the Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy (the Strategy) be approved.
2. That the receipt of Warm Homes funding by the Council to date be noted and that its application in accordance with the conditions of the grant be approved.

9 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

There was no urgent Part I Business.

10 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.
2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

11 **PART II MINUTES - CABINET - 4 JUNE 2025**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the Cabinet held on 4 June 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12 **WRITE OFFS OVER £10K**

The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of Write Offs over £10k.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

13 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 11 June 2025

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Leanne Brady (Chair), Andy McGuinness (Vice Chair), Robert Boyle, Jim Brown, Forhad Chowdhury, Alistair Gordon and Peter Wilkins

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.10pm

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Parris and Councillor Woods.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS - 27 FEBRUARY, 11 MARCH & 20 MARCH 2025**

The Minutes of the Audit Committee meetings held on 27 February, 11 March and 20 March 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.

3 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference as agreed at Annual Council on 22 May 2025 were noted.

4 **CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND EXTERNAL PARTNER RESPONSE TO THE SKILLS AGENDA REVIEW**

The Committee received the Cabinet Portfolio Holder and External Partner responses to the Skills Agenda review, a major piece of work completed the previous year.

The Chair noted that the full set of responses had been circulated and chose to highlight specific points for discussion.

Members welcomed the proposed expansion of Stevenage Works under **Recommendation 1**, particularly with respect to green construction and technologies such as solar and air source heat pumps. They cited the importance of the programme in tackling climate change and supporting local employment and apprenticeships. A Member commented that a major development at Bell Homes had not included a Stevenage Works contribution and asked that all future developments be required to make such contributions.

A Member commented on **Recommendation 3**, acknowledging the importance of training individuals in childcare but highlighted a lack of local nurseries in which such individuals could work. They emphasised the need for infrastructure to match the training provision and recalled a historic commitment by the Council regarding childcare facilities. The Chair confirmed that the lack of formal nursery provision in Stevenage had been acknowledged during the review, with much childcare being delivered through informal means such as childminders.

The Chair commented regarding **Recommendation 5**, which referenced work experience placements through Generation Stevenage involving four local schools. Clarification was sought as to why those particular schools were selected and whether other schools had been given the opportunity to participate.

A query was raised by a Member regarding **Recommendation 10**, which mentioned future employment opportunities linked to increased defence sector funding. The Member questioned whether jobs could legally be ringfenced for Stevenage residents, citing concern about skilled jobs being filled by non-residents. The Chair acknowledged that this issue had been raised during the review and noted the challenges in ensuring local recruitment, particularly where recruitment is managed by external agencies. Although the legality of ringfencing was uncertain, the Committee agreed that encouraging local recruitment should be a key message to employers.

The Chair shared formal feedback from the Portfolio Holder, who expressed his appreciation to Committee Members and particularly to the Council's Corporate Policy and Performance Manager for their work on the Skills Agenda. The Portfolio Holder welcomed Cabinet's positive endorsement of the review's findings and emphasised the importance of addressing the local skills gap, especially in relation to green jobs. They hoped that Stevenage Works could be expanded to address the issues identified.

5 **ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26**

The Committee reviewed the draft Work Programme for the 2025–26 municipal year. It was noted that a key area of focus, raised by members in the previous year, would be waste and recycling, particularly in relation to flat blocks. The programme included a proposed site visit scheduled for 21 July, intended to compare a high-performing block with one facing recycling challenges. Members agreed to proceed with this approach.

In response to a query about the inclusion of private blocks, Officers confirmed that the review would initially focus on council-owned blocks, over which the Council had operational control. However, efforts would be made to engage with private landlords and managing agents to promote best practice. It was noted that once improvements were successfully implemented in council blocks, these could be used to influence expectations across the private sector.

The Committee discussed the rationale for focusing on flats separately from houses,

with Officers explaining that many blocks lacked lift access, creating logistical challenges for residents in handling bins. A prototype three-wheeled bin, developed in-house, was being trialled to address those issues and it was hoped that in due course this would be demonstrated to Members.

A Member raised the point that waste and recycling systems should be consistent across the borough regardless of tenure, especially given the prospect of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the potential for a unitary authority in the future. This could lead to a more standardised approach to waste collection across a wider area.

It was emphasised by several Members that the Committee's work should prioritise waste reduction, not solely increasing recycling rates. Officers agreed, noting that this linked directly to the Council's broader work on tackling the climate emergency, and that waste management was a key contributor to carbon emissions.

The Committee endorsed waste and recycling as a major theme for the year. It was noted that related work on the Climate Emergency would be reviewed at meetings in November and March, with officer presentations planned.

Another area of focus would be fly-tipping, which members agreed was an ongoing concern. Officers confirmed that relevant Portfolio Holders and Officers would attend to support this work. A member emphasised the need for stronger enforcement as a core component in addressing the issue effectively. This was acknowledged and supported by the Chair.

The committee discussed plans to scrutinise active travel and transport accessibility later in the year, with a focus on Beryl bike usage, disability access, and transport hubs. Comments were made about diluting the topic by adding unrelated issues like car parking, though it was agreed that parking data was relevant to understanding transport behaviours. Members emphasised the need for better accessibility infrastructure, such as dropped kerbs, and highlighted the importance of partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) on these matters. The review would aim to balance promoting active travel with ensuring inclusivity.

The committee confirmed a forthcoming review of green space strategies, including visits to sites such as Stanborough Lakes and Fairlands Valley Park. This would support deeper scrutiny of parks and open space management.

Members agreed the overall scrutiny programme for the year was comprehensive.

6 DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT - WASTE & RECYCLING IN FLATS BLOCKS REVIEW

The Chair opened the discussion by referring members to the scoping document, noting that the topic had previously been touched upon and now warranted a dedicated focus. The Chair reiterated that Waste and Recycling in Flat Blocks had been identified as a key concern due to the increasing number of such developments in Stevenage.

The Chair highlighted that the review would include site visits, a presentation already delivered earlier in the year, comparative analysis, and engagement with officers. There was also potential for participation from officers at Dacorum Borough Council to provide external insight, given their prior experience in similar initiatives.

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the Bring Bank sites would be included in upcoming site visits scheduled for 21 July 2025.

The Chair summarised the projected timeline: continuation of site visits, a potential ride-along to the depot (pending arrangements), and a series of officer presentations and witness interviews and evidence gathering through September, October, and November, culminating in a final report and recommendations by the end of the year.

A Member commented on the issue of building height, noting the differences in recycling capacity between low-rise social blocks and higher-density private blocks. The Chair agreed that higher-rise blocks should be included in the site visits.

Members discussed the value of capturing tenant voices, proposing resident surveys as part of the evidence-gathering process.

A Member requested data on the Council's own waste from events and public spaces (e.g. Stevenage Day), commenting that waste appeared not to be segregated. The Chair suggested these points be raised with relevant officers.

A Member proposed more recycling bins in public areas such as parks and footpaths. They also shared a positive example of temporary recycling support provided during Ramadan at the Stevenage Muslim Community Centre.

A Member suggested including an audit of recycling practices within the Council's own buildings.

The Vice-Chair cautioned against allowing the review to broaden excessively and lose focus. While recognising the value of related points, they urged the Committee to remain aligned with the agreed scope.

In response, some Members asserted that many of those concerns were raised at the outset but not captured in the original scoping. The Chair and Scrutiny Officer acknowledged this and noted the importance of balancing focus with flexibility.

The Scrutiny Officer clarified that while the main review focus must remain on flat blocks—due to their pressing challenges—there was room within the scope to include related data and insights where relevant. Officers welcomed the review as an opportunity to drive improvements in an area they openly acknowledged as underperforming.

The Chair reiterated the importance of maintaining a targeted focus on flat blocks while recognising the validity of broader waste and recycling concerns.

The Committee agreed to proceed with the current scoping document,

The Committee expressed provisional satisfaction with the scoping document for the review on waste and recycling in flat blocks and agreed to move forward with the planned programme of site visits, officer presentations, and resident engagement with the understanding that related concerns may be raised again in future reviews.

7 **ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER 2025**

The Chair opened the item by noting the need to tidy and focus the tracker to ensure the committee's limited time and resources are used effectively.

The Chair proposed removing legacy or outdated items unlikely to be revisited, and encouraged a practical, outcome-driven approach to scrutiny.

The Scrutiny Officer provided context on the climate emergency review, which had been a major undertaking in a previous cycle. Although climate change was an ongoing issue, scrutiny work must be clearly scoped and time limited.

Two key scrutiny sessions were proposed:

November 2025: Review of the Council's annual climate progress report.

March 2026: A thematic deep dive, the focus of this was yet to be determined.

The Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation) offered to support members in shaping the March session topic through offline conversations.

Members commented on the value of revisiting areas already covered in full Council. It was clarified that scrutiny sessions would provide a more detailed and focused analysis, separate from broader council discussions.

The Chair proposed removing tracker items which were no longer actionable or relevant, including:

- COVID-19 economic impact
- Neighbourhood centres
- Post Office provision

Members supported streamlining the tracker to ensure focus on matters within the Council's remit.

Speaker 3 commented about a legacy recommendation related to locating EV chargers near cycleways, citing safety issues.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the recommendation was made in 2021 and would be reviewed for its evidence base before any amendment.

Members agreed the indoor market did not require a full scrutiny project due to ongoing developments but would benefit from a brief update.

Members agreed for the rail station update to remain on the tracker, but to be condensed, as progress was already underway and known to members.

The Chair proposed removing the Post Office item, given the council's lack of power over such provisions.

A Member commented on this, noting recent failures to provide a post office in the Old Town and highlighting the lack of local banking services, which negatively affected residents and businesses reliant on cash.

The Chair reiterated that such issues may fall under the Community Scrutiny Committee's remit, not this committee.

The Vice-Chair strongly advocated for focusing scrutiny only on areas where the Council had direct influence, cautioning against using limited resources on items with no practical outcome.

A Member responded that the Council could still act as a facilitator or advocate, citing examples from other local authorities that supported cooperative banking models. The Chair acknowledged this and suggested it could be reconsidered as a future item, potentially as part of next year's work planning.

The Chair confirmed that the tracker would be updated accordingly and thanked members for their contributions.

8 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

9 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

10 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, 3 July 2025

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Ellie Plater (Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren (Vice-Chair),
Kamal Choudhury, Mason Humberstone, Sarah Mead, Carolina Veres
and Peter Wilkins

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm
Time: End Time: 7.00pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Leanne Brady and Lynda Guy.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Community Select Committee, as approved at the Annual Council Meeting held on 22 May 2025, be noted.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Community Select Committee meeting held on 26 March and 8 April 2025 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26

The Chair introduced the Community Select Work Programme for 2025-26 and welcomed the Scrutiny Officer to provide an overview.

It was noted that items on the work programme were open to discussion, and members were invited to raise any questions as each item was reviewed.

Progress of the new Housing Allocations Policy

Members reviewed the progress on the new Housing Allocations Policy which was scheduled to return to the Committee in October 2025.

Members requested that the update included an emphasis on equalities, specifically addressing the needs of residents with mental or physical health conditions. It was noted that the policy was comprehensive and expressed the need for clearer

guidance such as a checklist to support both residents and members in navigating the application process.

Officers confirmed that additional work had been undertaken to strengthen the policy's approach to equalities and to better support care leavers. These developments were to be included in the October 2025 update.

Tenant Enforcement/Tenancy Audits

An update was provided on Tenant Enforcement, and it was confirmed that an update on Tenancy Audits was scheduled for the next meeting in September 2025. No further questions were raised.

One-off update item on Housing Damp & Mould

The Committee noted the need for an update on the Council's Damp and Mould policy, due to upcoming legislation coming into effect in October 2025. Officers advised that an update would be brought to the Committee in September 2025. Members were informed that partial government guidance had been received, and work had commenced to update relevant practices and policies.

It was acknowledged that the government had imposed a tight turnaround, and members expressed concern over the limited timeframe available to implement the changes. The Committee noted that further updates and scrutiny would likely be required beyond the September meeting. It was noted that Damp and Mould remained a longstanding challenge for local authorities, particularly in relation to older housing stock.

Officers confirmed that the Council's Damp and Mould policy had been updated and was currently compliant with existing requirements. The new legislation would also include additional hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). A briefing note would be circulated to members ahead of the September meeting to provide further details.

Members welcomed the Council's ongoing commitment to addressing this evolving issue and emphasised the importance of continued monitoring and review.

It was further noted that the Committee would be provided with tangible information on the impact of the recent integration of the Repairs and Voids services, including the benefits and outcomes of combining these facilities. This request was noted and would be addressed in the September update.

Equalities and Diversity

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that work had commenced on Equalities and Diversity. A draft report was scheduled to be presented to the Committee in November 2025.

Older People

The Committee considered the Council's work in supporting older residents. While it was noted that Hertfordshire County Council were responsible for Older People's Services, Stevenage Borough Council had undertaken several important initiatives. These included the development of an Age-Friendly Community, and the organisation of a conference planned for Autumn 2025.

Members raised concerns regarding digital exclusion, with residents unable to access essential services delivered online. The Committee highlighted that while digital exclusion was a key issue, the broader and varied needs of older residents should also be considered in future planning and service delivery.

Members asked for some information on the Age-Friendly Agenda ahead of the upcoming conference. Officers confirmed that this information would be shared with members in advance of the event.

The Chair suggested inviting the relevant Portfolio Holders and SBC's representative from the Hertfordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Board Committee to a future meeting to provide information, participating in relation to access to GP services.

Community Centre's

At this juncture, Officers advised that work was underway to explore potential funding allocations to support community centres across the town.

Members emphasised the importance of community centres in promoting the wellbeing and enrichment of residents.

The Committee highlighted the need for an update on this matter and requested that a formal agenda item be included at a future meeting to provide a clear statement on the current position and the future direction for the town's community centres.

Statutory Item – Crime and Disorder Committee

The Committee noted its statutory responsibility to meet once a year as the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee. Officers confirmed that the next meeting would be scheduled to align with the release of annual performance data from the Police.

It was noted that the previous meeting included contributions from partners including the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) team, and that this engagement would continue in future meetings.

Members highlighted the safety and wellbeing of teenagers in the town, and the need to address youth related issues such as online safety and anti-social behaviour. It was agreed that these topics would be incorporated into the agenda for the next Crime and Disorder Committee Meeting.

The Chair noted the importance of involving Portfolio Holders in Committee

discussions wherever possible to ensure accountability and active engagement, while maintaining the Committee's independence and scrutiny focus.

A question was raised regarding the importance of addressing males suffering domestic violence and the Committee requested relevant reports and data on this issue in the next Crime and Disorder meeting.

Public Health

The Committee received an update on revisiting Public Health as a work programme item. It was noted that the Committee had previously enjoyed a close working focus with the former Hertfordshire County Council Director of Public Health, and via this scrutiny focus the Council had previously received external funding for local projects. Members expressed a strong desire to retain Public Health on the Committee's work programme due to its ongoing relevance to the wellbeing of Stevenage residents.

Members highlighted the importance of access to relevant data to ensure transparency and accountability and welcomed local public health education initiatives such as the Healthy Hub.

It was acknowledged that Public Health linked with other areas of the Committee's work including with older people and digital exclusion.

Officers confirmed that a meeting with the Director of Public Health's office would be scheduled in the coming weeks to progress the matter.

2026 – 27 Work Programme

Officers informed the Committee that preparations were underway for the development of the Community Select Committee's 2026 – 27 work programme. It was noted that items would remain on the agenda due to outstanding actions from previous years. There were no current items for pre-scrutiny or policy development to report.

5 COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER 2025

The Committee reviewed the action tracker to monitor the progress of past recommendations which included responses from the Portfolio Holders.

Members received updates on a number of review areas. It was confirmed that work on Equality and Diversity had commenced, and Members would be informed when the review was complete. Updates were also provided on Housing Repairs and Voids, and Members were invited to consider scheduling future updates on this area.

The Committee noted that the New Towns Heritage Centre Review remained in development alongside wider regeneration plans. The Housing Allocations review was confirmed to be returning to the Committee in October 2025. Damp and Mould was discussed during the meeting and a follow up was scheduled.

Members commented on the importance of maintaining a focus on Sports and

Leisure services. It was noted that the contract should be monitored to ensure it was meeting the needs of the community. The Committee discussed the difficulties with booking systems, limited space in the new facilities and the need for a clear vision due to recent changes in the Portfolio Holders. Members commented on the membership tiers offered by Everyone Active and emphasised that these services should be accessible to all residents.

Further discussions took place regarding the role of Portfolio Holders in the Community Select Committee meetings. It was agreed that Portfolio Holders would be invited selectively, where appropriate, to help ensure clarity and accountability while maintaining the integrity and independence of the scrutiny process.

6 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

7 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 to 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That having considered the reasons for the following item being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

8 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Tuesday, 15 July 2025

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Jim Brown (Chair), Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Leanne Brady, Kamal Choudhury, Peter Clark, Alistair Gordon and Lynda Guy.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.00pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr McGuinness, Cllr Barr, Cllr Bibby, Cllr Elekolusi, Cllr Humberstone and Cllr Plater.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Part I Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 June 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendments:

- Item 5, paragraph 4. Add “by 15 July 2025”.
- Item 5, resolution amended to “The Committee noted the draft Work Programme and requested further discussion at the 15 July 2025 meeting.”

3 PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - OUTTURN Q4 MONITORING REPORT FOR GENERAL FUND, HRA AND CAPITAL

The Committee heard that Cabinet had received a comprehensive update on the Council’s financial position, as detailed in the consolidated report summarising key resource matters.

The Strategic Director (CF) informed Members that an overall underspend of £573,000 was reported for the General Fund against a budget of approximately £67 million. While this figure appeared significant in isolation, it represented a modest variance in context. Notably, fluctuations in business rate income (NNDR) were highlighted — with a current-year gain of £145,000 offset by a projected reduction of £183,000 in 2026/27.

The Committee were informed that the report included known impacts on the

2025/26 budget, indicating a projected increase in costs of £320,000, primarily due to carry-forward budget requests from 2024/25.

Regarding the HRA, a £340,000 2024/25 underspend was recorded, however, this included increased repair costs, which remained a significant pressure despite previous budget uplifts offset by reduced financing expenses. A more detailed update was anticipated through the Quarter 1 monitoring report in September and the HRA Business Plan in November.

The Committee heard that 2024/25 actual capital expenditure totalled £44 million, with some schemes reprofiled into future years.

The Strategic Director (CF) provided an update on council-owned subsidiaries. Queensway LLP continued to face challenges; an action plan was in place, and a fuller report on all companies would be presented in September. It was noted with satisfaction that the new Yali restaurant had now opened.

Cabinet had approved all recommendations contained in the report.

A member commented on the cleaning machine being purchased for the town centre and asked whether it would be also used to clean the flooring at the Bus Interchange. Officers confirmed that cleaning at the interchange was constrained to early Sunday mornings due to operational hours and public safety. Midweek cleaning options were being explored, dependent on access restrictions. Photographic evidence was cited showing significant improvement following Sunday cleaning.

A Member raised a question regarding the purchase of a high-cost thermal imaging camera. The Strategic Director (CF) advised that a follow-up response would be provided by the relevant department.

4 **PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - HOUSING HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

The Committee heard that the Cabinet had received a report outlining upcoming legal and regulatory changes relating to housing health and safety, commonly referred to as Awaab's Law, which would come into effect from October 2025 through a phased approach.

The Assistant Director (Building Safety and Housing Property Services) advised that initially, the focus would be on damp and mould and all types of emergency housing hazards, with subsequent phases extending to other hazards.

The Assistant Director (Building Safety and Housing Property Services) confirmed that a range of preparatory measures had already been undertaken, with further actions planned to ensure full compliance. This included reviewing internal policies and procedures to meet the new requirements.

The Committee were advised that new electrical safety requirements for the social housing sector were expected from November. These aligned with the Council's

current practice of five-yearly safety checks, and therefore no additional work was required.

As part of compliance preparations, the Assistant Director (Building Safety and Housing Property Services) informed the Committee that the Repairs and Maintenance Policy had been amended. The proposed changes were summarised in the report and highlighted in Appendix 1.

Cabinet had approved all recommendations contained in the report.

Members welcomed the progress made, particularly in light of previous scrutiny work on damp and mould.

5 **PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - Q4 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE
2024/25 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25 AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE
SUITE 2025/26**

The Committee heard that the Cabinet had received a report and presentation on the Council's end-of-year corporate performance for 2024/25 and the proposed direction for the forthcoming year.

The Strategic Director (RP) advised Members that the report provided a comprehensive overview of key performance data and reflections on the Council's current position. It also outlined forward-looking priorities, shaped through member engagement and aligned with the "Making Stevenage Even Better" corporate plan.

The Committee were advised that the corporate performance suite had been reviewed to ensure alignment with statutory reporting requirements and locally relevant performance indicators

The Strategic Director (RP) advised that the revised suite now included approximately 100 milestone actions linked to core programmes and projects across the Council's five strategic priorities.

A red-rated performance indicator was noted concerning the garage void rate, which remained slightly above the desired threshold. Members heard that causes included increased terminations due to the cost-of-living crisis and that proposed mitigation measures included proactive marketing and engagement with local housing associations to improve uptake.

The Chief Executive had highlighted achievements under key corporate programmes, including:

- Town centre regeneration
- Delivery of social and affordable housing
- Community outreach through the new leisure contract with Everyone Active

The Committee heard that the Annual Report was praised by Cabinet for effectively

showcasing the Council's delivery and including strong visual content.

The Strategic Director (RP) advised members of the following feedback from Cabinet:

Cabinet urged continued efforts to identify windfall housing sites to address the need for affordable and social rented homes.

The importance of promoting the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF) was raised by Cabinet, although comments were made about its perceived complexity, which may act as a barrier to uptake.

Cabinet suggested that partnership activities (e.g. with the Equalities Commission and Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse) and community events be more prominently acknowledged in future reports to reflect the full breadth of Council activity.

Cabinet had approved all recommendations contained in the report.

The Chair reflected on:

- The need to maintain useful equalities indicators, drawing on historical examples such as BV174 and BV175 (related to discrimination complaints and resolutions).
- The difference in perspective between Cabinet and scrutiny forums.
- The importance of retaining access to “crunchy” data when needed for effective scrutiny.
- The need to better capture less-visible yet impactful work, such as youth engagement in schools and interfaith events, which may be overlooked in high-level reporting.

The Strategic Director (RP) acknowledged the feedback and confirmed:

- A review of the CCCF's complexity would be considered in conjunction with the new Portfolio Holder
- While the performance suite included around 50 KPIs, numerous operational indicators were also monitored internally to ensure effective service delivery.
- The Government was consulting on a new Local Government Outcomes Framework, which could see the reintroduction of standardised performance measures across eight thematic areas. A Council response would be submitted by the end of August 2025.

The Assistant Director (SDS) advised that a report had been presented to Cabinet outlining proposals for the utilisation of a portion of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funding totalling £1.078 million. The funding was allocated across three key workstreams:

Capital improvements at 74 flat blocks, including signage and infrastructure upgrades.

Contingency provision for any funding shortfall in the rollout of mandatory food waste collections from April 2026.

Project management support to ensure successful delivery of these initiatives.

Cabinet welcomed the focus on improving recycling provision at flat blocks, which were acknowledged as challenging areas. Cabinet had approved all recommendations contained in the report.

Members expressed particular interest in the trial of a new three-wheeled bin designed to improve access at blocks with limited mobility infrastructure. These bins were intended to assist waste crews and could reduce the need for structural changes such as ramps.

Responding to a Member question, the Assistant Director (SDS) confirmed that 74 flat blocks (59 council-owned and 15 private) were subject to a comprehensive audit. The audit assessed the presence and adequacy of current recycling facilities. Private blocks, from which the Council also collected waste, would benefit from improved signage and community engagement to encourage recycling.

A Member asked a question regarding anticipated increases in recycling post works. The Assistant Director (SDS) advised that data from a previous pilot indicated a sustained increase in recycling rates post-intervention. Extrapolating from this, officers estimated a potential 2–4% increase in borough-wide recycling rates from the flat block improvements. A further 5% increase was anticipated following the introduction of separate food waste collections, potentially lifting overall rates from 39% to between 44–47%.

A Member asked a question regarding the location of bins. It was clarified that all bins would be external to buildings in line with fire safety regulations. The three-wheeled bins were to be used by crews on collection days and do not imply indoor storage or individual floor-level facilities.

The Assistant Director (SDS) confirmed they were liaising with planning colleagues to ensure future developments accommodated appropriate waste and recycling infrastructure. The Assistant Director (Planning and Regulation) added that harmonisation of requirements through the local planning system remained an ongoing priority.

The Chair commented on the potential safety issues that may arise regarding ramp gradients in adverse weather. The Assistant Director (SDS) assured members that ramps would be site-specific, compliant with building regulations, and installed in

consultation with engineering colleagues.

Responded to a Member comment regarding overall reduction of waste, the importance of prioritising waste reduction over recycling was reiterated. The Assistant Director (SDS) advised that the EPR scheme's polluter-pays principle was designed to discourage excessive packaging by producers, with taxation acting as a deterrent.

It was acknowledged that the EPR income was an ongoing allocation, however future sums were not expected to be at the same level as the year one allocation. The Assistant Director (SDS) confirmed that transparency and strategic allocation of these funds would be ensured through Cabinet oversight and financial governance.

7 PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL RETROFIT STRATEGY

The Assistant Director (Planning and Regulation) briefed the Committee on the report recently submitted to Cabinet, which sought approval to endorse the Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy. The strategy was led by the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, of which the Council was a member.

The Committee heard that the strategic direction and aims were detailed between paragraphs 3.8 and 3.18, with the full strategy included as an appendix.

The Assistant Director (Planning and Regulation) advised Members that endorsement of the strategy provided the Council with a formal mandate to participate in current and future phases of retrofit activity across the partnership.

The Committee were informed that the accompanying action plan would be refined in collaboration with multiple agencies to ensure it was realistic, robust, and deliverable.

Cabinet had approved all recommendations contained in the report. Scrutiny Members noted and welcomed the strategy.

8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME ITEMS

The Chair advised Members that a list of previously discussed topics was included in the agenda, and Members were invited to raise any additional suggestions.

The Chair emphasised that the committee was not seeking to take on the work of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) but recognised value in exploring workforce-related topics within the committee's remit, such as workforce survey and profile.

Other potential scrutiny topics proposed included:

- Social value in procurement contracts
- Contract compliance and financial risk, especially regarding investment decisions by local authorities

- Council communications, including strategy and responsiveness to public concerns

A member query submitted by Cllr Phil Bibby was referenced regarding the proposed new swimming pool and leisure centre. The Chair commented on the timeliness of scrutinising this matter, given ongoing public consultation. The Strategic Director (CF) clarified that a Cabinet report on the facility was scheduled for October, with subsequent scrutiny at Overview and Scrutiny Committee post-Cabinet decision.

The Scrutiny Officer reflected on the previous year's approach, where three items were added to the regular meeting agenda. This balance between standing items and scrutiny topics was considered effective. They proposed reviewing the current topic list to:

- Assess feasibility and scheduling
- Identify topics suitable for committee presentations and recommendations
- Determine which could be addressed via briefing notes or where scrutiny is already planned

The Committee supported this approach. The Chair proposed consolidating topics under broader headings, noting:

- Workforce (covering workforce survey and profile)
- Communications (as a distinct topic)
- Social Value and Ethical Investments (as a subset of financial oversight)

The committee agreed that ongoing financial monitoring remained a standing responsibility and that was also within the scope of the Audit Committee.

A Member strongly supported scrutiny of communications, citing the need for a strategic and unified approach to responding to public discourse, particularly online, to ensure consistency and clarity in messaging.

The Scrutiny Officer agreed to review and prioritise the suggested topics with topics to be consolidated and categorised for practical implementation.

9 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION TRACKER**

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the item, explaining that each Scrutiny Committee received an Action Tracker, which monitored progress on previously scrutinised topics. Members had received the tracker in advance of the meeting, and while it could not be displayed live, the report included hyperlinks to relevant committee reports and decisions, offering easy reference for follow-up.

The Chair and Committee were reminded of topics previously scrutinised during the past municipal year, which included:

- Customer Service Centre Relocation
- Website Usability and User Experience
- ICT Update and Cybersecurity

The Scrutiny Officer noted that, in previous conversation, the Chair had expressed interest in revisiting cybersecurity, given the increased risk to local authorities and the importance of maintaining vigilance in this area.

Members were invited to comment on whether they wished to receive regular updates via the Action Tracker throughout the year and to indicate which items they may want to revisit or scrutinise further.

The Chair acknowledged the usefulness of the tracker and highlighted the Customer Service Centre front entrance as a live example where Members could observe operations first-hand and form any relevant feedback. They noted that the topics were straightforward but welcomed further input from Members.

10 **URGENT PART I DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no Urgent Part I Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

11 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

12 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.
2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

13 **PART II MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on

15 June 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to some minor amendments.

14 **PART II DECISION OF THE CABINET - WRITE OFFS OVER £10K**

The Strategic Director informed the Committee that the Cabinet had considered writing off Council Tax debt deemed irrecoverable which was properly due to the Council and was more than £10,000.

Members asked a number of questions that were responded to by Officers.

15 **URGENT PART II DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no Urgent Part II Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

16 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

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Meeting: CABINET
Agenda Item:

Portfolio Area: RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE


Date: 17 SEPTEMBER 2025

GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE (2025/26 – 2029/30)

Author – Clare Fletcher
 Contributors - Strategic Leadership Team
 Lead Officer – Clare Fletcher
 Contact Officer – Clare Fletcher

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To update Members on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 1.2. To update Members on the 2026/27 Fair Funding proposals nationally and locally for Stevenage Borough Council.
- 1.3. To advise Members concerning the current and future position of the Council's General Fund budget over the next five years, noting this covers changes as a result of Local Government Reform (LGR).
- 1.4. To update Members regarding the revised inflation projections and pressures for the General Fund MTFS.
- 1.5. To update the 'Balancing the Budget' Future Town Future Council (FTFC) financial targets for the period 2026/27 – 2028/29.

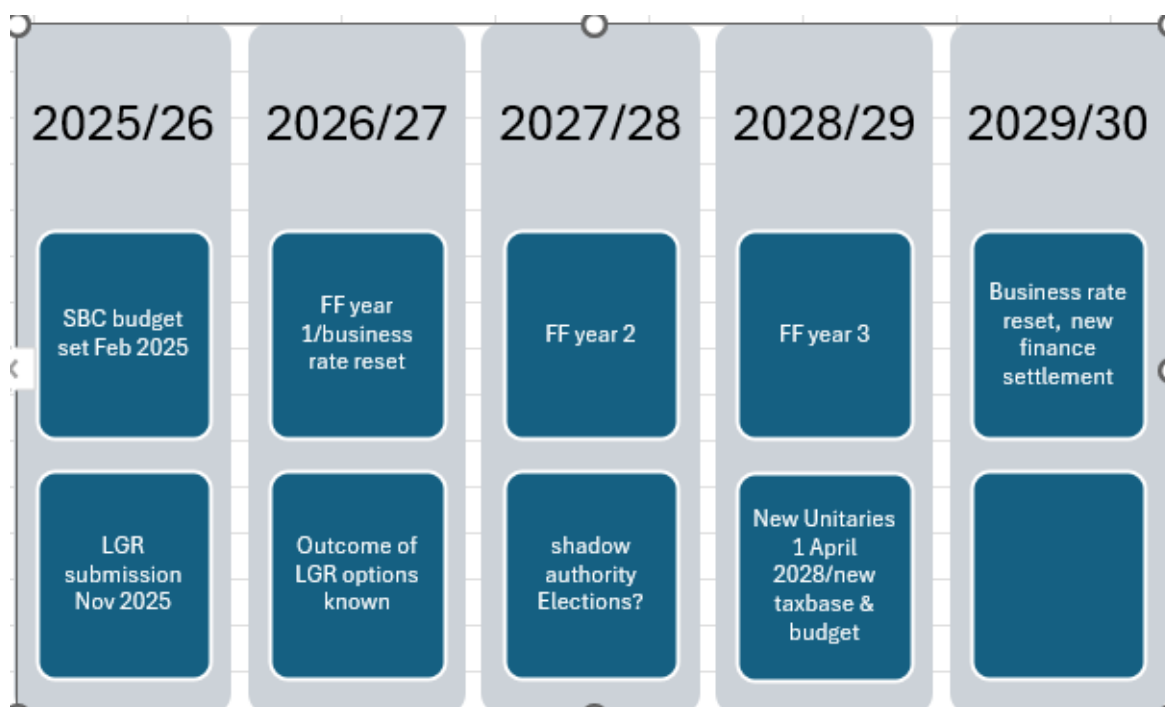
2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members re-approve the MTFS principles, as outlined in paragraph 3.10.
- 2.2 That, for modelling purposes, Council tax increases be set at the threshold assumed by the Government in the Fair Funding consultation in order to support the resilience of the Council's finances as set out in paragraph 4.7.5.
- 2.3 That the updated inflation assumptions used in the MTFS as set out in section 4.1 of the report be approved.
- 2.4 That Members note the impact of Fair Funding grant funding as set out in the report, noting this could be subject to change following consultation feedback.

- 2.5 That the approach to the 'Balancing the Budget' options as set out in section 4.10 be approved.
- 2.6 That the Balancing the Budget options identified of £776K are noted (excluding the Fees and Charges estimates including taxi licence fees) to be presented to the October 2025 Cabinet and General Purposes Committee.
- 2.7 That the Balancing the Budget target of £2.284Million, be approved for the period 2026/27- 2029/30, as set out in section 4.10 of the report.
- 2.8 That the indicative General Fund borrowing costs for the Oval as set out in of the paragraph 4.10.3 (3) are approved and included in the MTFS.
- 2.9 That Members approve the additional funding to be set aside in an earmarked reserve for the Council's Queensway LLP of a further £50K per year, (paragraph 4.10.3 (6)).
- 2.10 That Members approve the set aside of £150K per year to support the Council's apprentice programme as set out in paragraph 4.10.3 (2).
- 2.11 That the General Fund growth allowance of £75K is noted and is approved for the use of the Council's FTFC priorities.
- 2.12 That a minimum level of balances for the General Fund of £3.57million be approved for 2026/27 as set out in paragraph 4.11.7.
- 2.13 The MTFS is regularly reviewed and revised to reflect any material financial pressures, so forecasts are updated and re-presented to the Cabinet for approval.
- 2.14 That the Trade Unions and staff be consulted on the key messages contained within the MTFS and more specifically when drawing up any proposals where there is a risk of redundancy.

3. BACKGROUND

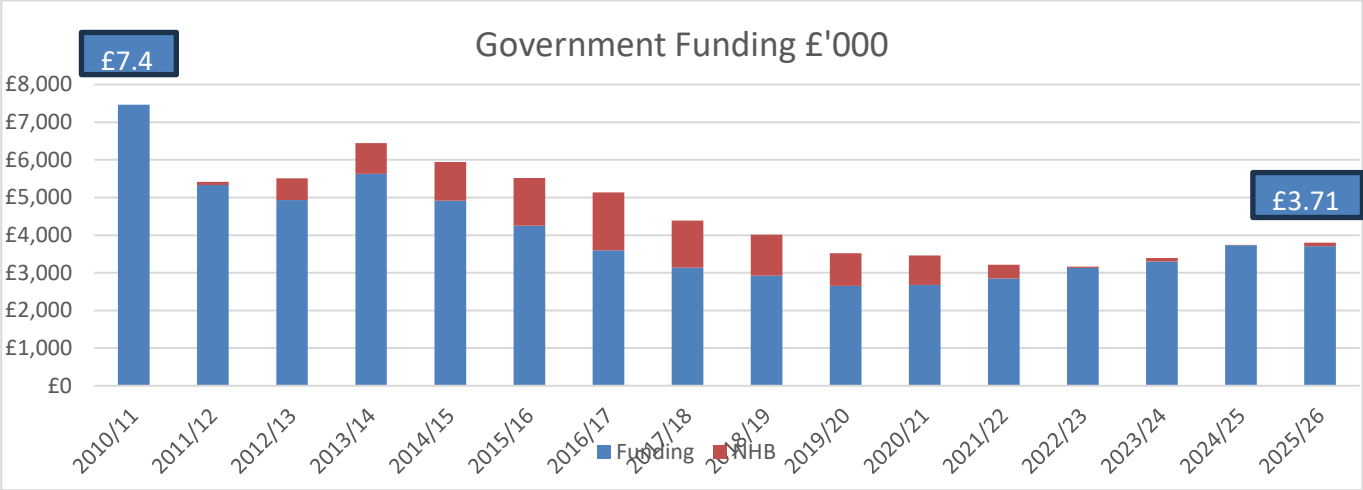
- 3.1 The MTFS is presented at least annually to the Cabinet and more often if financial risks are heightened which have included when impacts relating to COVID and the recent cost of living crisis have heightened financial risk.
- 3.2 This report will update Members on a projection for the General Fund for the period 2025/26-2029/30, with particular emphasis on the current and next year's budgets. The MTFS has been written under the backdrop of some fundamental change for Districts like Stevenage, as a result of the Government's Local Government Reform (LGR) Agenda and the Fair Funding 2.0 reforms which the Government has recently consulted on, both impact the years within the MTFS period.



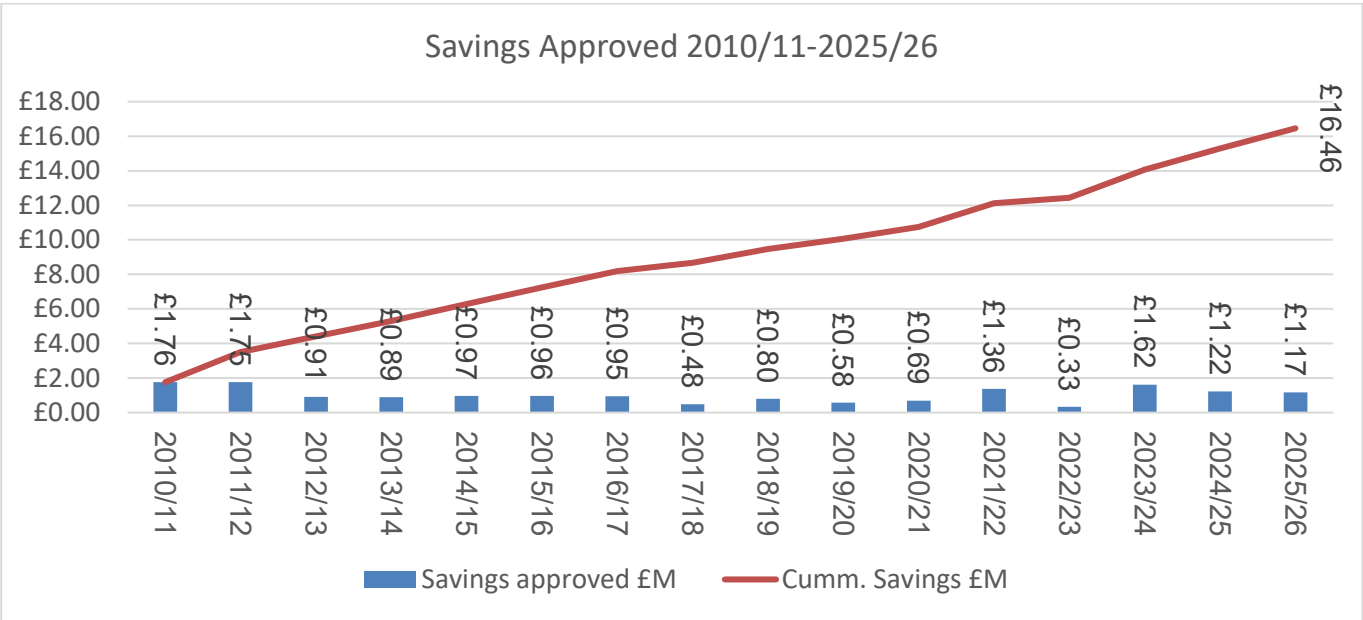
- 3.3 The changes set out in para. 3.2 presents challenges in the construction of the MTFS, in that the current Council Member administration will change (if the timetable is met) from 2028/29 into a larger unitary with a shadow authority from 2027/28. This means combining upper and lower tier functions into a larger geographical area. It is important to demonstrate the financial resilience of the Council as it enters into a new unitary model. More information on LGR can be found here on the Council's website <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/about-the-council/devolution-and-local-government-reorganisation#:~:text=About%20the%20Council-.Devolution%20and%20Local%20Government%20Reorganisation,-Devolution%20and%20Local>
- 3.4 The financial challenges set out in the Council's previous MTFS's and Budget reports have outlined more than a decade of local authority funding cuts between 2010/11 and 2019/20 and even 2025/26 levels are still well below historic levels pre 2010/11. Which, when considered alongside the need to have absorbed inflationary pressures and legislative taxation changes has resulted in the delivery of significant savings in order to balance the Council's books. The current government has set out its intention to review the funding distribution for individual Councils that ensures it is truly based on need within a set cost envelope. This change is due to be implemented in 2026/27 and based on the current consultation information has a positive financial impact for Stevenage, this is discussed in more detail in sections 4.4-4.7 of the report. The changes for Stevenage improve the Council's funding position and this report will also set out some options for Members to consider in light of the improved financial position, see also (para. 4.10.3).
- 3.5 The Institute of Fiscal Studies (report dated 7 June 2024) noted that *'taking the period 2010/11 to 2024/25 as a whole, Councils' overall core funding is set to be 9% lower in real terms and 18% lower in real terms per person this year than at the start of the 2010s. The reduction is set to be larger for councils serving deprived areas (e.g. 26% per person for the most deprived tenth) than for the less deprived areas (e.g. 11% for the least deprived tenth). This reflects the fact that the funding increases seen since 2019/20 have offset only part of the overall cuts seen in the 2010s, which fell hardest on poorer areas. Average council tax bills are around 2% higher in real terms than in 2010/11, and*

little changed since 2019/20, with high inflation offsetting high nominal increases over the last few years. This compares with a real-terms increase of over 60% between 1997/98 and 2010–11. This is the current Governments challenge in resetting any funding distribution among local authorities.

3.6 At a local level Stevenage’s 2010/11 government funding adjusted for subsequent changes for council tax support etc is £3.69Million lower for 2025/26 after 15 years and before consideration of the impact of a 10% population growth and 15 years of compound inflationary pressures.



3.7 Despite the significant financial pressures the Council has faced since 2010/11 Stevenage has had a track record of identifying and delivering permanent savings to reduce the overall financial footprint of the Council and to date has delivered £16.5Million of savings through its priority, ‘Balancing the Budget’, as summarised in the chart below.



3.8 These historic funding challenges further evidence the importance the need for Local Government Funding reform and MTFs planning which is the mechanism through which the Council assesses the financial impacts of national and local pressures. All budget challenges are modelled and the impacts on the draw and level of balances are considered, such as:

- National and local government policy on the five year forecast of resources for the General Fund (and Housing Revenue Account);
- Local pressures emerging from service provision,
- Inflationary pressures on the Council's finances
- Impact of the implement of LGR

3.9 The current approved MTFS principles are set out below.

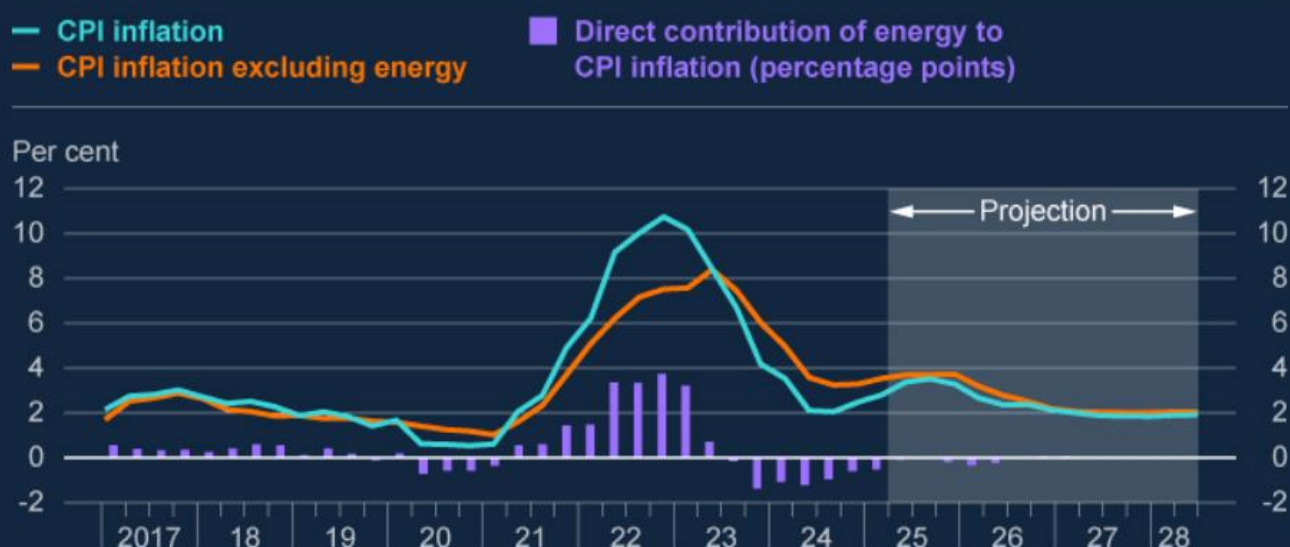
No	MTFS principles
1	To ensure the financial resilience of the General Fund that any net funding gap is reduced by 2028/29.
2	To consider as part of the budget setting process, and throughout the year as necessary, what support can be given to the community, tenants, leaseholders and businesses in times of particular hardship.
3	To use the Council's reserves in a cost-efficient and planned manner to deliver the Council's priorities.
4	To maximise the Council's income by promptly raising all monies due and minimising the levels of arrears and debt write-offs.
5	To identify alternative means of resourcing the Capital Strategy to minimise the impact of borrowing (GF only).
6	In setting General Fund balances a % for overruns (currently 1.5%), specific known risks, loss of savings & risks associated with new ventures and the cost of borrowing for the capital programme is included.
7	To identify variations to the approved budget via quarterly monitoring and only incur additional on-going spending when matched by increased income or identified savings.
8	To propose Council tax increases in line with the Government 's annual thresholds for modelling purposes to ensure that the General Fund core resources are sufficient to meet the cost of running the Council's services.
9	To ensure that resources are aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan and FTFC priorities and growth limited to the Council's top priorities
10	The Council does not depend upon short term sources of funding such as business rate gains and in any one year only allows a proportion of the gains to be retained in the General Fund based on the MTFS projections.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 General Fund pressures -Inflation

4.1.1 The inflation included within the MTFS is modelled using estimates for salary and direct pay inflators. This takes into account current levels of inflation and predictions over a five year period, with pay being the biggest inflation element for the Council. Pay awards have gradually reduced over the last few years from an average in excess of 5% to 3.2% in the current year. Looking ahead the Bank England CPI forecast (May 2025) predicted a reduction to 2% over the medium term with lower energy prices contributing to the falling CPI increase to circa 2%, despite higher inflation figures today.

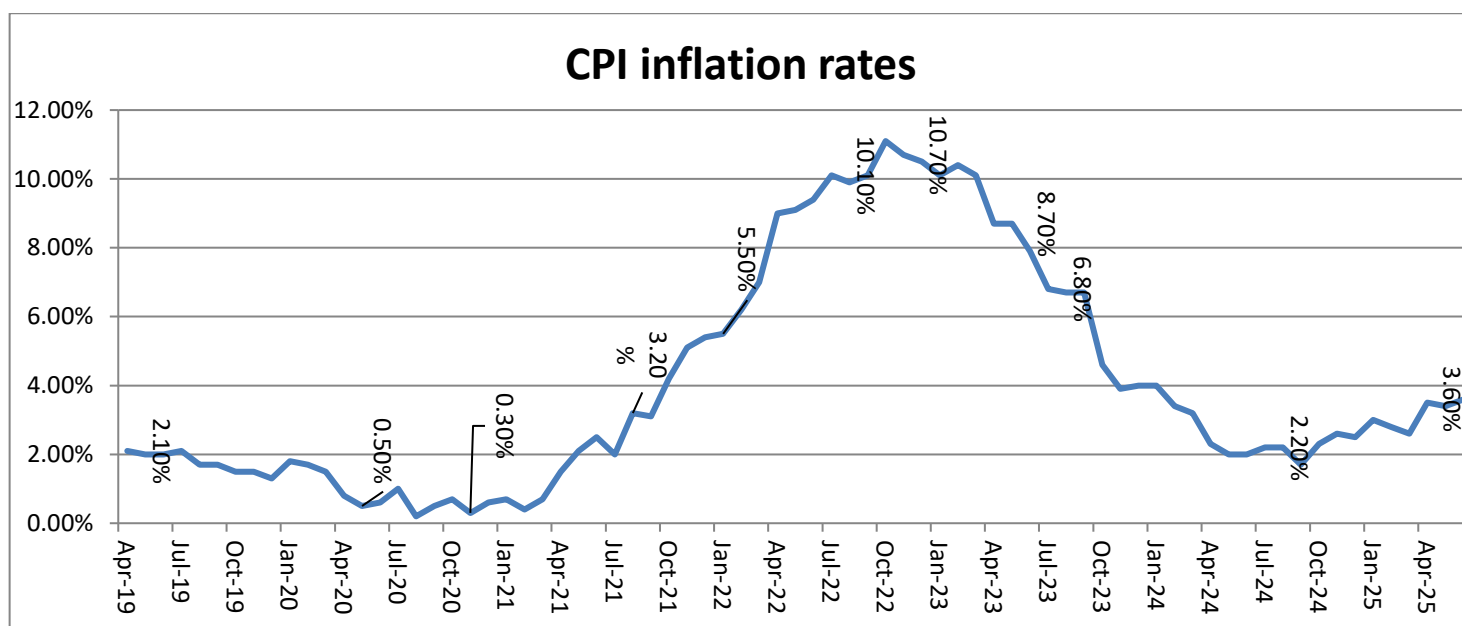
Chart 1.1: CPI inflation and CPI inflation excluding energy (a)



4.1.2 The indices used in the 2025 MTFS update have due regard to current levels of inflation, Bank of England forecasts and the 2026/27 onwards inflation assumptions are summarised in the table below. For note the July Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 3.8% (June 2024 2%). Clearly any levels of higher inflation will increase cost pressures in the MTFS.

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Inflation-Applied to:				
Salaries - % increase	2.75%	2.25%	2.00%	2.00%
CPI indices increases	2.75%	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%
CPI September NNDR increase	3.50%	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%
Investment interest	3.00%	2.50%	2.25%	2.00%
Fuel Increases	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Gas & Electric Increases				
Gas (unit charge only)	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Electricity (unit charge only)	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%

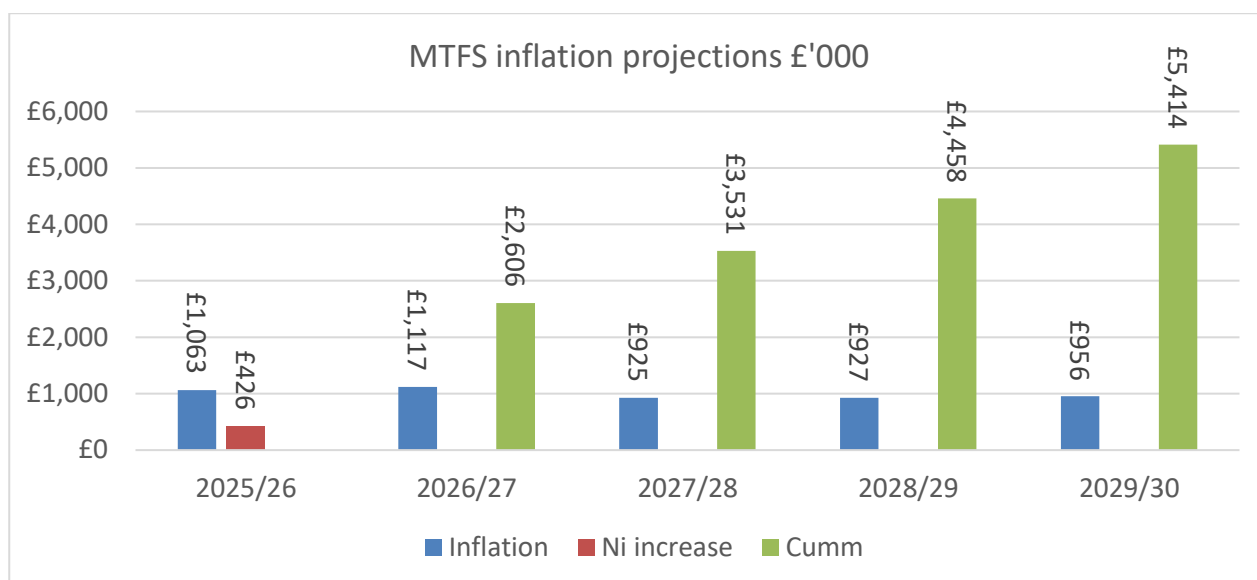
4.1.3 CPI is the tracked measure for inflation used by the government and also used for increases to business rates and Council housing rents, (September CPI). The historic CPI trend is shown below and the volatility with the impact of the cost of living crisis and higher utility costs and is still well above the Bank of England 2% target.



4.1.4 It is difficult to predict the sustainability of lower inflation over the medium term but the MTFS rationale and alternative scenarios are set out below.

Rationale for inflation assumption	
Salaries - % increase	The employer offer has fallen from 5.67% in 2023/24, to 3.2% in 2025/26 (slightly above the budgeted 3% amount) Based on lower inflationary increases the projection is 2.75% 2026/27 and 2.25% and then 2% thereafter. This outside the control of the Council and subject to collective bargaining and whether pay offers will continue above CPI to reflect years of below inflation increases.
Utility increases	Overall utility costs have decreased from the high of 2023/24 and lower increases are projected for 2026/27 onwards. The level of increase going forward in the MTFS are based on historic average increases (excluding the spike in 2023/24) and may fluctuate between individual years.
Consumer Price Index (CPI) indices increases	The July CPI was 3.8% and the MTFS has modelled inflation reducing to the Bank of England target 2% during the MTFS.

4.1.5 The amount of inflation projected for 2025/26 to 2029/30 is summarised in the chart below and totals £5.4Million, this included the 2025/26 £426K for increased Employer's National Insurance contributions announced in the 2024 Autum budget. One of the main reasons the annual inflation increase reduces during the MTFS period is the gradual reduction in estimated pay inflation from 3.2% in 2025/26 to 2% by 2028/29, (see also para 4.1.2). However this maybe subject to change if subsequent government budgets introduce national tax changes.



4.1.6 The 2026/27 inflation projections include £100K additional costs for the Hertfordshire triennial pension review, this is only an estimated allowance at this stage and the financial impact will not be known until later in the current year prior to the 2026/27 budget setting.

4.2 Other General Fund Pressures

4.2.1 In addition to meeting the inflation funding gap, the MTFS makes assumptions about other General Fund pressures and these are summarised in the table below.

Additional MTFS Pressures	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Rationale
Housing subsidy administration	£10,000	£20,000	£30,000	Subsidy payments are based on caseload which is reducing although the workload has not reduced at the same rate due to the increased real time information and changes of circumstances. The MTFS is assuming an additional £10K reduction per annum in subsidy per year.
Elections Budgets	£0	£50,000	£50,000	Elections budgets have not increased for a number of years, monies were transferred to an elections reserve to adequately resource the 2025/26 bi-election and 2026/27 District elections. However extra funding is required beyond that.
External support for the new Forster Country park	£20,000	£0	£0	The 1st Quarterly Monitoring report to this Cabinet meeting identified £15K required for 2025/26 and a further £20K is recommended for 2026/27.

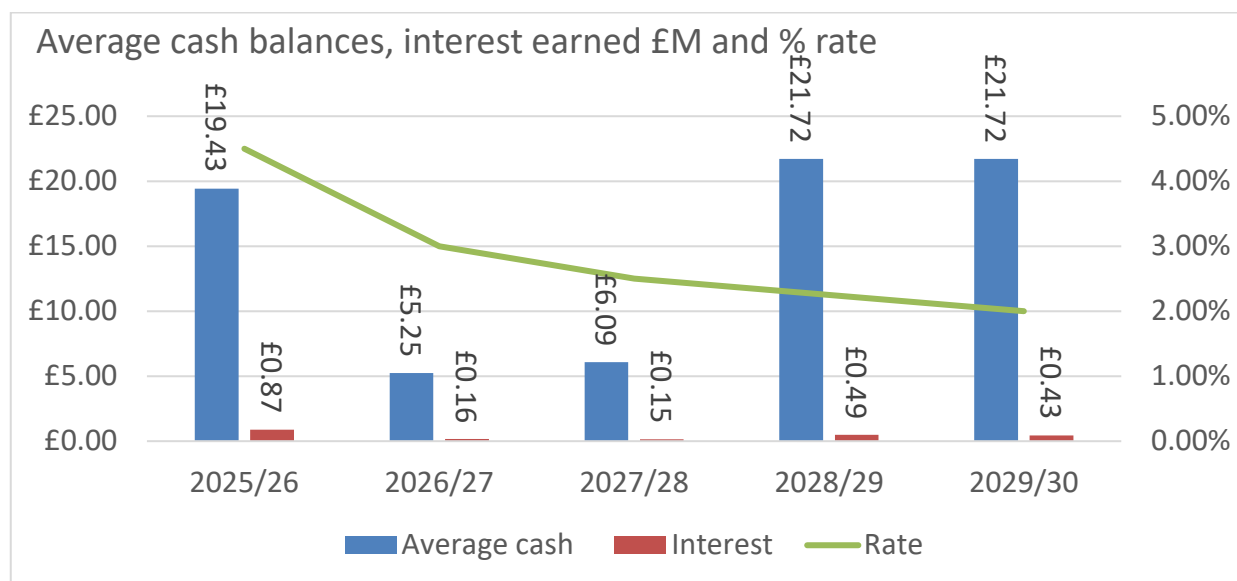
Additional MTFS Pressures	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Rationale
Car parking income	£31,720	£51,720	£181,000	The MTFS previously assumed a loss of £300K in 2024/25, £200K 2025/26 onwards, however 2024/25 parking income exceeded the budget and the current projections in the 1st Quarter Monitoring, show an improvement. The projection has been reduced from 2027/28, when current compounding income on Swingate car park ceases (full year impact 2028/29).
Cost of Local Government Reorganisation	£150,000	£150,000		The CFO recommends setting aside a budget for additional officer capacity or external advice to ensure the Council has enough funding for advice and officer capacity for LGR activities.
Queensway LLP reserve	£50,000	£100,000	£150,000	The Council set up the LLP to act as a catalyst for regeneration in the town centre as set out in the 4th Quarter Monitoring report to the July 2024 Cabinet. In order to ensure that funding to invest in the asset and/or support the LLP over the 37 year lease, the CFO recommended a new contribution of £50K per year to the Queensway reserve was included in the 2024/25 MTFS. This is to ensure the financial resilience of the asset and town centre, (see also 4.10.3 (6))
Total Revised Pressures	£261,720	£371,720	£411,000	

4.2.2 Additional financial pressures/growth are identified in the report and set out in paragraph 4.3.10 and are recommended taking into account the revised funding position of the Council. In addition, the MTFS includes a limited growth allowance of £75K per year. Growth bids will be put forward for Member consideration in the November Balancing the budget report.

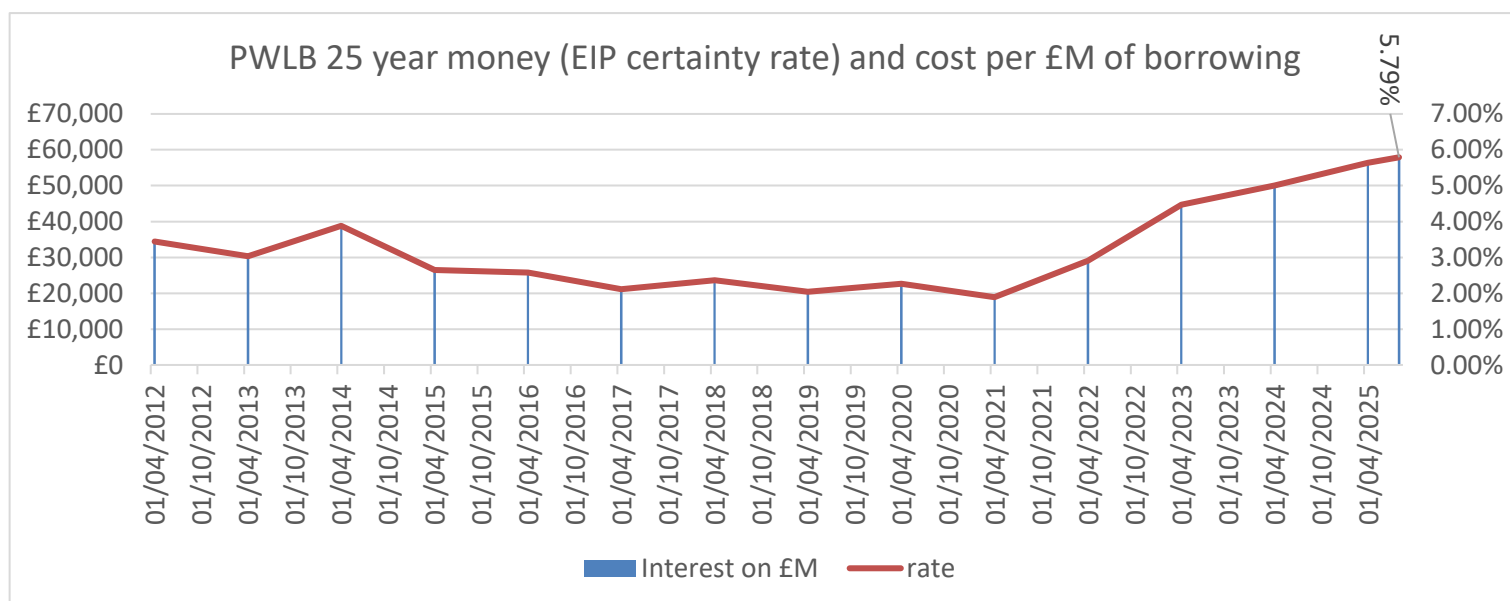
4.3 Investment interest projections and borrowing costs

4.3.1 investment income projections are based on an estimate of the amount of cash reserves the Council will hold in any one year, (both revenue and capital) and provisions such as business rate appeals, less any internal borrowing (using the Council's cash), rather than taking external borrowing via Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The Council has used internal borrowing to fund capital expenditure rather than take

external loans particularly when PWLB rates are high and the cost of lost investment interest is lower. The current projections for investment interest are summarised in the table below.



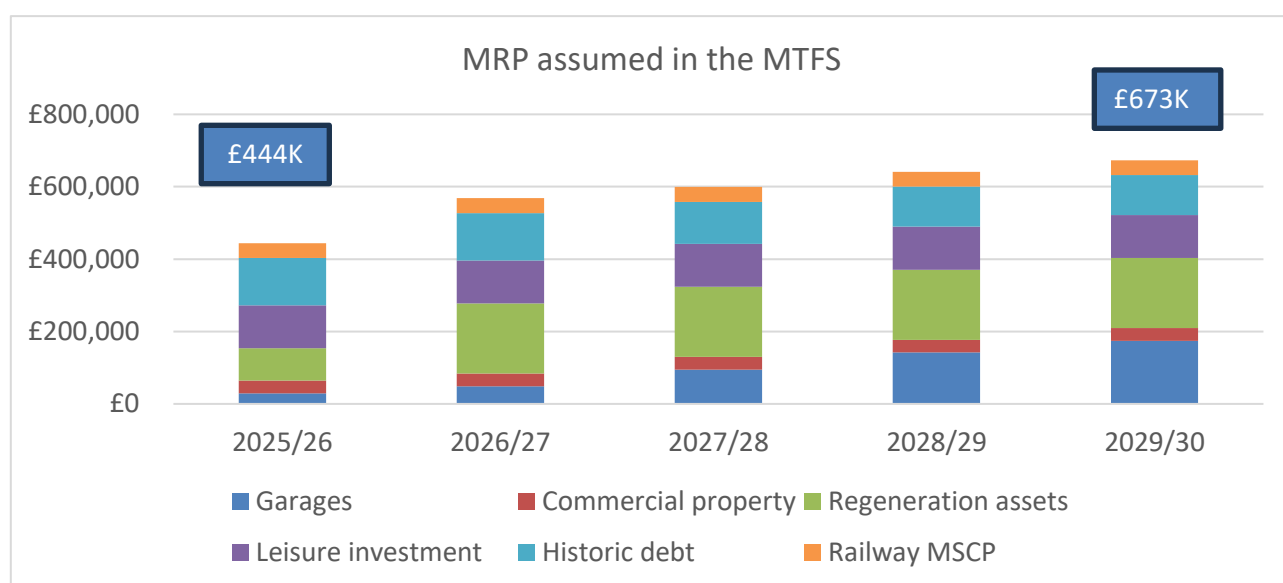
- 4.3.3 The average cash balances reduce significantly in 2026/27 and 2027/28 due to the temporary use of internal balances for Swingate LLP and the projected use of other ring- fenced receipts.
- 4.3.4 The Council has not borrowed for General Fund prudential borrowing for the Garage Improvement Programme, Railway MSCP and leisure centre improvements as there have been available cash balances and investment interest rates have been low. However, a consideration for current and medium-term borrowing (rather than using cash balances) is that PWLB rates (which are the government gilt rate + % uplift), are significantly higher than in recent years and has a significant adverse impact on the cost of borrowing particularly for Housing Revenue Account financing.



- 4.3.5 If the General Fund needs to externally borrow as cash balances reduce below that required for day to day running of the Council, then this will increase expenditure in the

General Fund for example, based on an average investment rate lost of 4.5% versus a borrowing rate currently of 5.79% is an extra £12,900 per million externally borrowed.

- 4.3.6 There is no allowance in the General Fund MTFS for new borrowing costs, other than that already approved for the new Garage Improvement Programme (2026/27-2028/29 £2.6Million in total), the remainder of required prudential borrowing is currently funded through internal borrowing, other than the historic purchase of the commercial asset. There is provision for the cost of repaying the borrowing or Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), which is based on the cost of the asset divided by its life. The amount of MRP provided for is shown in the chart below.

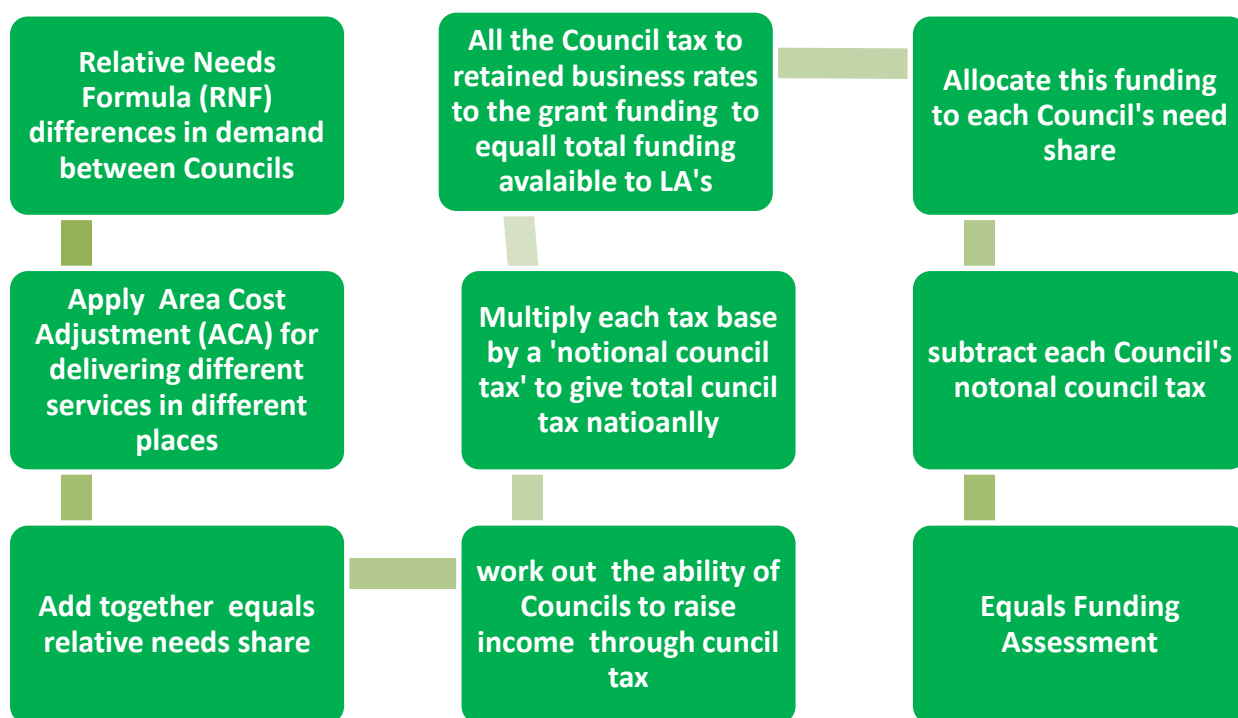


4.4 Fair Funding Reform 2026/27 onwards (Nationally)

- 4.4.1 The Fair Funding Review is the current Government's plan to change how money is allocated to Councils in England. The consultation document talks about taking *'tough choices to improve services for the working people of Britain – with a balanced approach that protects all local authorities but ensures funding is truly based on need'*. The reforms aim to account for the different needs and costs faced by communities across the country, including adjusting for the costs of remoteness faced by rural communities, and the ability of individual local authorities to raise Council Tax, while also resetting business rates income. This means an update to the formulae used to calculate funding allocations, which are a decade out of date. The aim is to make the system fairer and more current, so Councils get funding that better reflects their local needs based on a number of factors. So, from 2026/27, this revised system for allocating funding between Councils, will take account of those revisited factors of Councils' spending needs and their relative abilities to raise revenues themselves via council tax. The elements of the formula are listed below.

Fair Funding Factors	What It Means
Relative Needs	How much support a local area requires (e.g. for social care, housing, deprivation etc.)
Area Costs	How expensive it is to run services in that area (e.g. wages, property costs)
Resource Adjustment	How much money the council can raise itself (mainly through council tax)
Core Spending Power 2026/27-2028/29	

4.4.2 The formulas are then applied based on the graphic below.



- 4.4.3 The revised criteria includes a 'Foundation Formula' for general services and then specific formulas for services like adult social care and temporary accommodation with adjustments for labour, property, and travel costs.
- 4.4.4 The UK government consulted on the proposed reforms between 20 June 2025 and 15 August 2025. To dampen any large swings in funding, the proposed changes will be phased in over three years to ease the transition for Authorities, with funding floors in place to limit losses for those receiving less funding under the new system than currently. However, unlike the previous system there is no ceiling on the amount of increase gaining Council's will receive.
- 4.4.5 The argument for reform is that it has not be reset for current demographic and deprivation factors and is based on no change to a government funding system since the introduction of 50% business rates retention in 2013/14, not to mention additional pressures faced by Councils today. The difficulty with a long overdue reset means any new scheme could and appears to lead to a significant redistribution of funding around the country.
- 4.4.6 Included in the funding consultation is the proposals for a full reset of the Business Rates Retention System for 2026/27. The aim is to ensure funding is targeted where it is needed most and restore the balance between aligning funding with need and rewarding business rates growth. The local share (the percentage share of locally collected business rates that will be retained by local government) will continue to be subject to redistribution across local government via 'top-ups' and 'tariffs'. Stevenage is a tariff authority and retains more business rate than the historic needs assessment and for 2025/26 the estimated gains are £1.2Million. The re-set would see those gains reduce through a higher 'tariff' paid to the government with the reset likely to be based

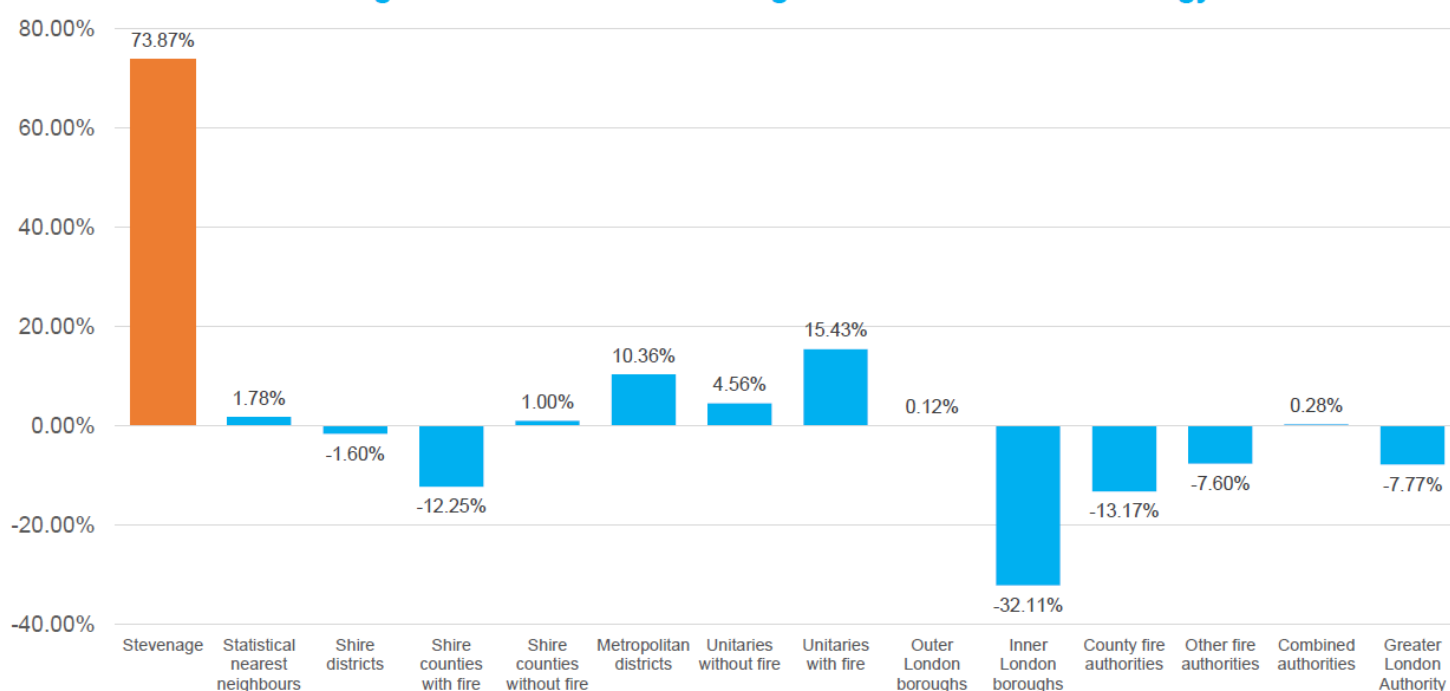
on the 2025/26 NNDR 1 submission and not 2025/26 or 2024/25 actuals realised, however this has not yet been clarified.

- 4.4.7 At a national level the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has estimated that the reformed funding allocation system will redistribute significant amounts of money between Councils. If it was introduced in full immediately, they estimate that the government's baseline reform proposals would see funding reduced by a **combined £2.1Billion for 186 Councils and increased by the same combined amount for 161 others. One-in-ten councils would see a fall in overall funding (including from council tax) of 14% or more, while another one-in-ten would see an increase of 10% or more.**
- 4.4.8 Alongside changes to government funding allocations the consultation document also proposes simplifying grant funding pots. In recent years, central Government has increasingly relied on ringfenced micro-grants in an attempt to ensure the continued delivery of siloed departmental priorities. In 2025/26, over 300 grants were awarded to local government from across Whitehall. Research published by the LGA in 2020 found that there were nearly 250 different grants provided to local government, around a third of which were awarded on a competitive basis. The LGA research estimated that the average cost to Councils in pursuing each competitive grant was in the region of £30,000 costing each local authority roughly £2.25Million a year chasing down various pots of money across Whitehall.
- 4.4.9 Local authorities will receive bigger, combined grants that replace several smaller ones, helping them focus more on delivering services than on managing payments. These grants will have their own rules for how money is shared, and some will use old methods while others will use new, single formulas. Starting in 2026/27, at least four grants will be merged:
1. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping- funding received by SBC
 2. Public Health,
 3. Crisis and Resilience, - includes the Discretionary Housing Payments received by SBC
 4. Children, Families and Youth.
- More details, including how money will be split and any restrictions, will be provided closer to the date, and the government has said they may consider merging more grants in future.
- 4.4.10 The Fair Funding review consultation also identified ending New Homes Bonus grant. In the current system, New Homes Bonus is funded through a portion of the Revenue Support Grant to incentivise additional housebuilding. However, the government sees this bonus is an ineffective incentive for new homes.
- 4.4.11 The new grant funding in the Fair Funding Settlement, sits alongside an assumption of a 3% core council tax referendum principle and a 2% adult social care precept, which will result in an average overall real terms increase in local authority core spending power of 2.6% per year between 2025-26 and 2028-29.
- 4.4.12 The next section of the report will outline the impact of funding reform for SBC, however this is heavily caveated, there is likely to be significant consultation feedback about the impact of the new regime. For instance, Hertfordshire County Council has identified themselves as a significant grant loser of circa £45Million which inevitably will have a knock on impact on Local Government Reform finances in Hertfordshire. The chart

below from LG Futures shows that while Shire Districts have on average lost 1.6% of funding through the new Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA), Stevenage in contrast has gained by 74%, with statistical nearest neighbours gaining 1.78% by comparison. As stated in para. 4.4.12 the level of funding should be caveated because changes could be made as a result of the consultation such as:

- Longer transition period than the proposed three years
- A ceiling on gains to allow more dampening for Councils losing funding
- Changes to factors to dampen the impact on big gainers and losers
- The consultation is also ambiguous about the share of the resource adjustment attributable to the GLA.

% change in 'new SFA' due to change in distribution methodology



- GLA figures exclude the £1.16 billion transport topslice which is carried forward without redistribution.

4.5 Fair Funding Reform 2026/27 onwards Stevenage borough Council

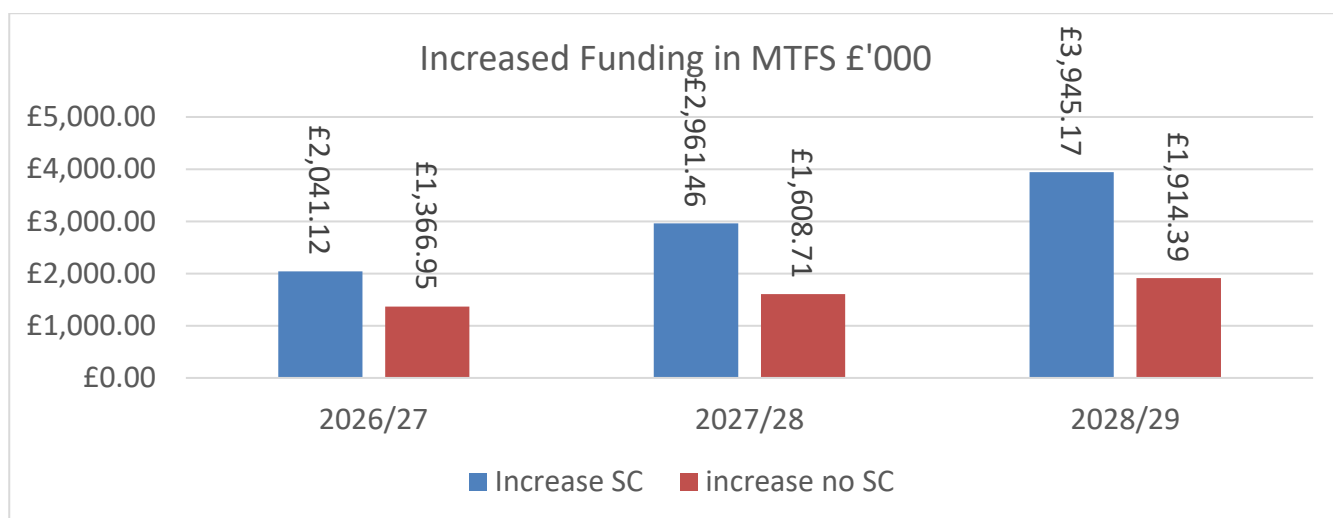
4.5.1 The Council's Chief Finance Officer (CFO) has reviewed a number of financial models identifying the impact of Fair Funding on the Stevenage Borough Council (SBC). All of these models show Stevenage gains from Fair Funding 2.0, this is because Stevenage has a higher needs based assessment (including deprivation) and a relatively low ability to raise council tax due to the size of the tax base. The Council has engaged LG Futures to model the impact for SBC however there are a number of variables and the modelling below is based on social care grant being included in the overall funding pot and also excluded. Members should also be aware that:

- The MTFs assumes only £200K of business rate gains per year as they can fluctuate (2023/24 gains £343K, 2024/25 £960K, 2025/26 est. £1.39M)
- The models assume no business rate gains 2026/27-2028/29 as there is a proposed reset in 2026/27.

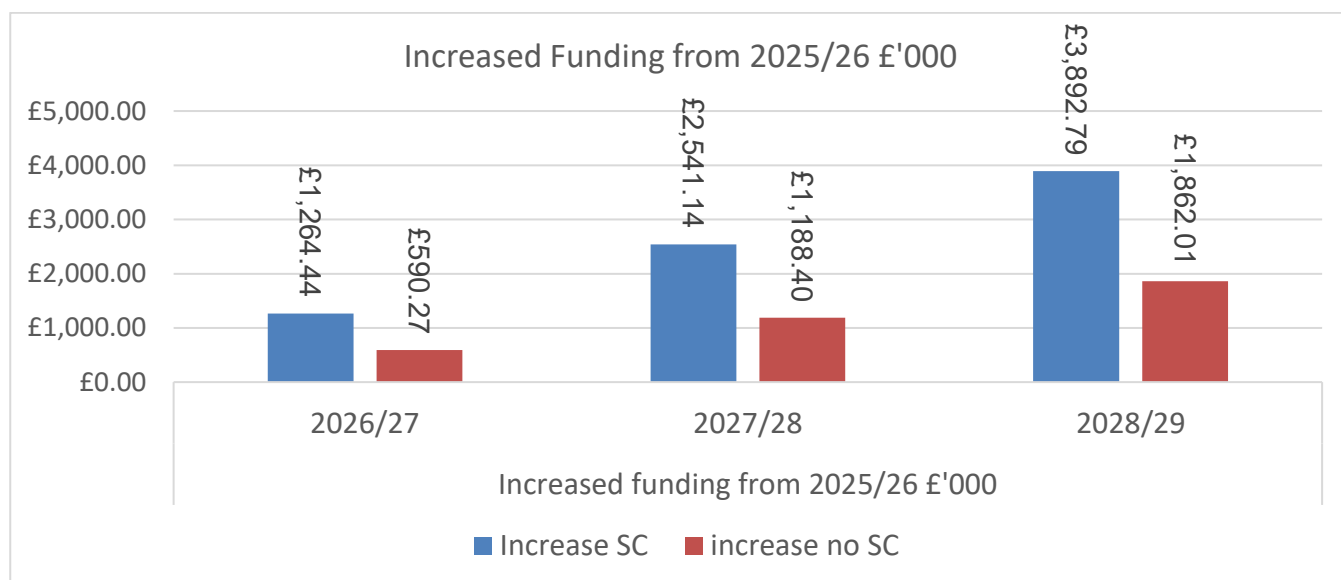
Funding:	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 MTFS	2026/27 (with SC) £'000	2026/27 (no SC) £'000		2027/28 MTFS	2027/28 (with SC) £'000	2027/28 (no SC) £'000
RSG	£149.05	£152.77				£155.83		
NNDR	£3,379.03	£3,470.30				£3,548.75		
Recovery grant	£283.82	£283.82				£283.82		
NIC	£200.82	£200.82				£200.82		
NHB	£97.00	£0.00				£0.00		
NNDR Gains	£1,239.58	£200.00	£0.00	£0.00		£200.00	£0.00	£0.00
General Fair Funding	£5,349.29	£4,307.72	£6,348.35	£5,674.17		£4,389.22	£7,349.66	£5,996.92
Council tax	£7,040.51	£7,305.40	£7,305.89	£7,305.89		£7,580.26	£7,581.28	£7,581.28
Total excluding grants	£12,389.80	£11,613.12	£13,654.24	£12,980.07		£11,969.49	£14,930.95	£13,578.20
Total Gain from MTFS assumptions			£2,041.12	£1,366.95			£2,961.46	£1,608.71

Funding:	2028/29 MTFS	2028/29 (with SC) £'000	2028/29 (no SC) £'000	Incr. from 2025/26 £'000	Incr. MTFS £'000
RSG	£158.95				
NNDR	£3,628.37				
Recovery grant	£283.82				
NIC	£200.82				
NHB	£0.00				
NNDR Gains	£200.00	£0.00	£0.00		
General Fair Funding	£4,471.95	£8,415.54	£6,384.76	£1,035.47	£2,077.05
Council tax	£7,865.47	£7,867.05	£7,867.05	-£1.58	-£1.58
Total excluding grants	£12,337.42	£16,282.59	£14,251.81	£1,033.89	£2,075.46
Total Gain from MTFS assumptions		£3,945.17	£1,914.39		

- 4.5.2 With the scenarios outlined above (depending on the treatment of social care grant), the Council is a significant gainer under Fair Funding, **before** any post consultation changes are made. This means effectively that the Council converts fluctuating business rate gains into guaranteed increased grant funding over a three year period. Compared to the MTFS a minimum additional £1.9Million over the three years and an additional minimum £1.36Million in 2026/27. The does not include the impact of lower business rates in future years as set out in Section 4.6.



4.5.3 When Fair Funding projections are compared to 2025/26 grant awarded and estimated business rates, the gain is lower than in para 4.5.2. This is because the 2025/26 core funding included potential business rate gains of £1.2Million (approved in January 2025), versus the MTFS working assumption of just £200K per annum. Going forward business rates gains should be lower due to the reset as part of the Fair Funding review.



4.6 Business Rates

4.6.1 Retained business rates are the amount above which the government allows Councils to keep business rates generated within their boundary. This is calculated by:

Step one - The government sets a baseline need value - this is assessed as the amount needed based on the funding formula.

Step two – The Council collects business rates in Stevenage, net of reliefs, and keeps a notional 40%, (50% is sent to the government and 10% to Hertfordshire County Council).

Step three- Calculate the amount of section 31 grant due to the Council based on reliefs the government has legislated (post the business rate methodology was introduced), given to reduce the amount of collectable business rates (retail

reliefs, extended small business rate relief, zero rating increases in business rates).

Step four - The government applies a tariff which then reduces the collected 40% share of business rates and reliefs (based on the last revaluation on rates), so that it is closer to the baseline need (as identified in step 1).

Step five - If there are still gains after step 4, a further levy is applied at 50% so effectively any gains above baseline need are split 50:50 with the government.

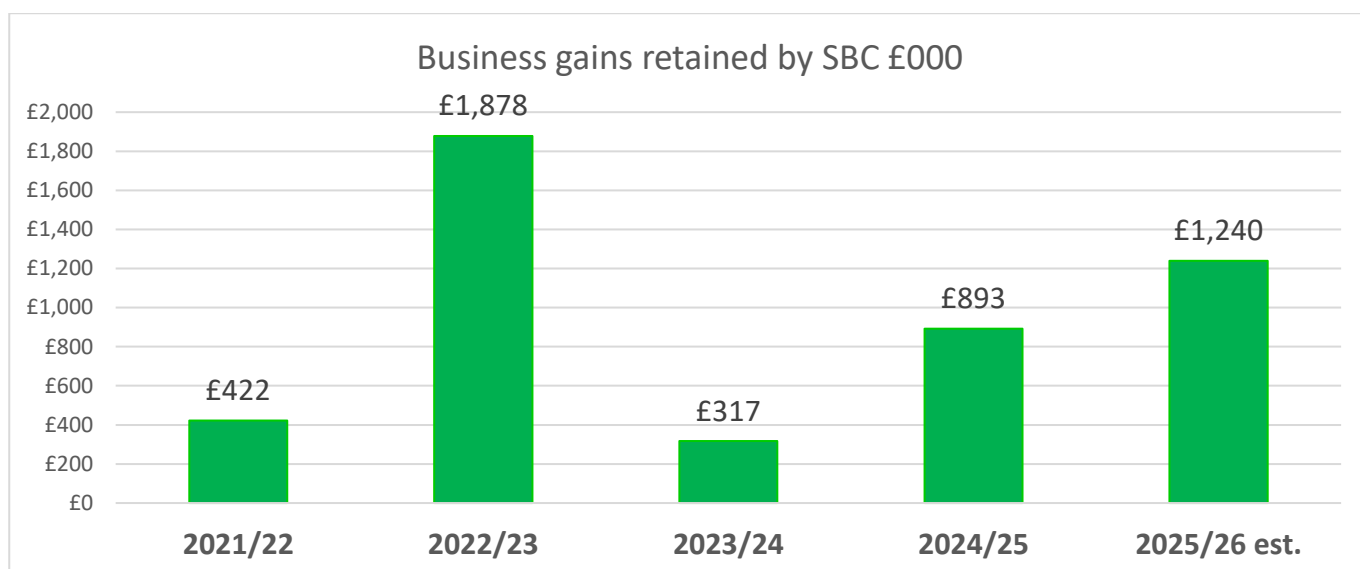
Or In the event that there are in fact losses (i.e. less business rate income was received than the baseline) SBC must fund the first 7.5% below the base line need (approximately £180,000). The rest of the losses are funded by the government via the 'safety net'.

Step six - The levy, safety net and section 31 grants are paid based on the amount due in year, all other payments are paid based on estimate with gains and losses due/paid in future years.

4.6.2 As a core part of the funding system proposed in Fair Funding 2.0 consultation, the government is delivering a full reset of the Business Rates Retention System in 2026/27. This reset is long overdue and crucial to the government's aims to ensure funding is targeted where it is needed most and restore the balance between aligning funding with need and rewarding business rates growth. The local share (the percentage share of locally collected business rates that will be retained by local government) will continue to be subject to redistribution across local government via 'top-ups' and 'tariffs', which will be updated at the Reset.

4.6.3 The Reset in 2026 is happening alongside significant changes to the business rates tax system. The proposed approach reflects a significant change to tax policy that will coincide with the reset: the introduction of further tax rates (also known as business rates multipliers) with permanent targeted support for retail, hospitality and leisure to replace the temporary time-limited relief currently in place. The reset will also coincide with the triennial revaluation of rateable values for nondomestic properties. Both these factors will lead to changes in the business rates that each local authority collects and retains locally and have impacts on how the system works.

4.6.4 Reallocating growth and resetting Business Rates Baselines in 2026/27 will expose authorities to a higher risk of falling below their Baseline Funding Level, particularly in the first year following a reset before any growth accumulates again. Furthermore, the 2026 revaluation and the reform to business rates multipliers mean there is higher risk in estimating levels of collectable business rates, again increasing the risk of falling below Baseline Funding Levels. Whilst Stevenage has benefited historically from business rate gains, the reset as part of the Fair Funding review will see the tariff element increased (step four) likely based on the 2025/26 NNDR 1 return. SBC Business rate gains have fluctuated significantly, influenced by a number of factors such as opportunities to pool gains among Councils or the 'pilot' in 2019/20 where Hertfordshire Councils kept 75% of all business rates. However, SBC has only been in the 'Hertfordshire pool' twice and the government has only allowed Hertfordshire Councils to be in one pilot scheme. This adds complexity to projecting income and, in addition to this gains are not realised in the year they were achieved but are based on an estimate for any particular year.



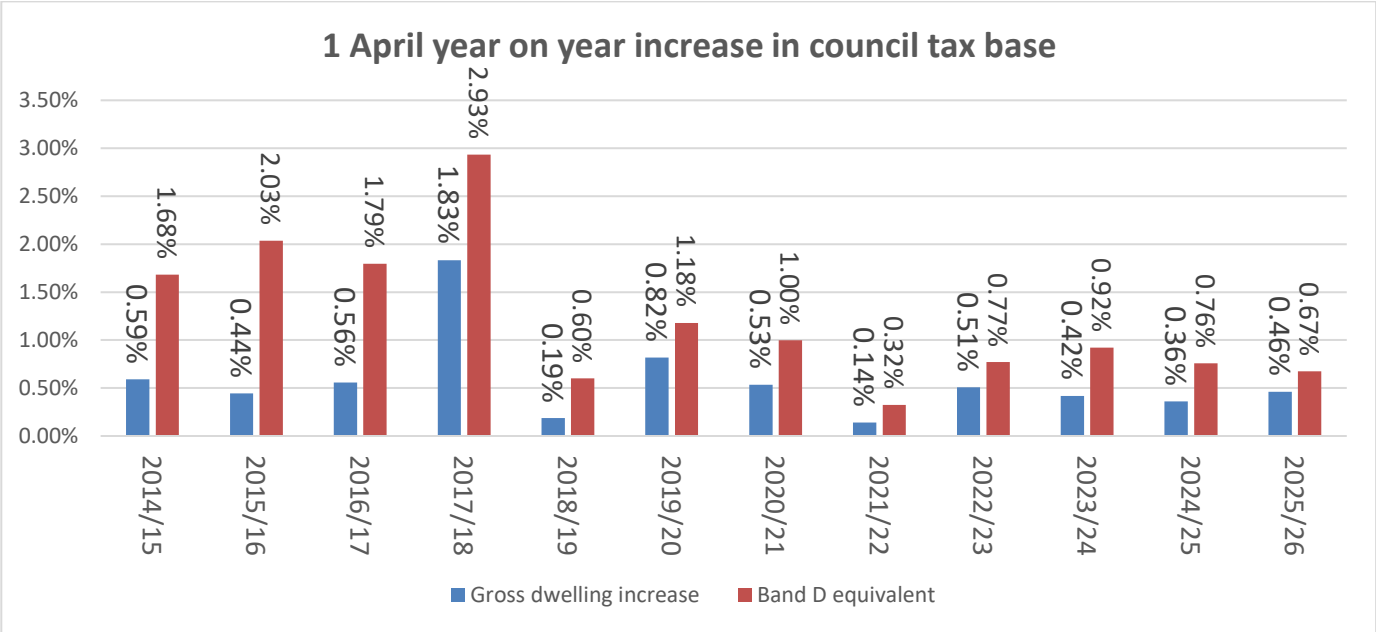
Note: 2022/23 was the release of the appeals provision following the 2023/24 revaluation.

- 4.6.5 In recognition of the additional potential for uncertainty in setting Business Rates Baselines in 2026/27 and estimating business rates income following the reset, the government proposes increasing the level of protection provided to local authorities by the Safety Net for 2026/27 before planning to scale protection back down to the current 92.5% level over the course of the multi-year Settlement period. Further information will be provided ahead of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. However, for budgeting purposes the CFO proposes including a 7.5% reduction in assumed business rates in the MTFS until further information is known for the first two years of the re-set. This would equate to circa £160K of cost per year to the General Fund before any safety net payments would be paid by the government.
- 4.6.6 As part of the recent consultation the Government is also asking about reforms to the levy rate which is currently 50% on any gains above the baseline for Stevenage. The levy may need to increase to pay for greater safety net payments as a result of the re-set and other changes set out in this report. The CFO recommends not assuming any business rate growth in the MTFS.
- 4.6.7 The proposed reforms for 2026/27 included a question on the continuing need for 'pooling' arrangements. This is where a configuration of four to five Councils including the County can form a 'pool' with the aim to retain a higher level of business rates by ensuring the optimum 'low' level rate on gains. The Government is considering whether pooling arrangements should continue from 2026/27. The Government's rationale is that due to the proposed newly designed levy rate and increased protection provided by the Safety Net in the first year of the Reset, this may reduce the need for pooling arrangements as it would increase the protection to business rate income and continuing to provide a reward for business rate growth.
- 4.6.8 The Business rate yield projections for 2025/26 are currently below the 2025/26 original estimate, this is partly due to anticipated known growth not realised in the taxbase to date (£180K lower for Stevenage) and the number of appeal payments recognised to 1 July 2025. Members will be updated as part of the November Balancing the Budget report on the projected level of business rates for 2025/26. However, Members should note the Council transfers business rate gains above the £200K assumed in the General Fund to

the NNDR earmarked reserve and does not use them to fund expenditure in year (see also para 4.12.2).

4.7 Council Tax

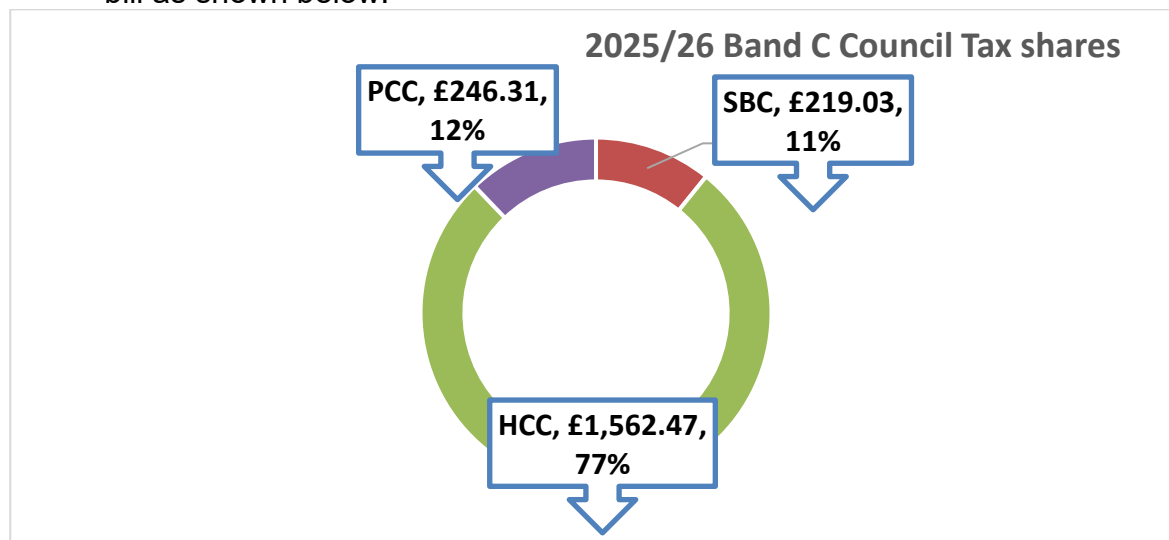
- 4.7.1 The amount of council tax that can be raised annually is influenced by two factors, firstly the growth in the tax base and secondly the inflationary increase applied each year. The tax base estimates when new properties will be brought into use and converts this to Band D equivalents for the year, together with all the existing properties and discounts given.
- 4.7.2 The tax base is calculated based on an estimate of the gross dwellings in Stevenage, reduced by the amount of discounts, (single person discount, council tax support and other exemptions). The increase in new properties fluctuates significantly based on economic development. The taxbase for 2025/26 was approved at the November 2024 Cabinet meeting and totalled 28,571.8 equivalent “Band D” properties after making allowances for a 98.0% collection rate. The Taxbase as at 1 September 2025 is 28,637.02 which is 65.21 Band D equivalents higher, with a further eight months for changes to the tax base meaning the approved taxbase will be exceeded, (conversely, 1 August 2024 the position was 143.82 Band D equivalents below the approved base).
- 4.7.3 The percentage increase in the taxbase does fluctuate from year to year the MTFS assumes an average increase of 0.75% per annum,(the average over the last six years was 0.74%).



- 4.7.4 When calculating any future taxbase, the level of collectable council tax must be estimated, (properties less reliefs and discounts) plus a deduction for bad debt. The taxbase for 2025/26 included an assumption of 2% deduction for bad debt increased from 1.75% for 2024/25. The tax collected in year continues to be challenging (94.5% in 2024/25) and generally lower than in other Hertfordshire Councils, however the Shared Revenues and Benefits service with East Hertfordshire District Council is to trying to improve this by:

- Looking at a banded discount council tax support scheme so those on universal credit who have small changes in monthly income levels will not need to be reassessed for 2027/28
- Review of processes around arrears which has now been implemented
- Introducing more automation

4.7.5 The MTFS includes a 2.99% increase in council tax for 2025/26 onwards, in line with the government assumptions for Fair Funding (see also para 4.4.11). Members will be aware that SBC only retains a relatively small part of the overall council tax raised for the year. To illustrate this, taking a Band C property (which makes up 55% of total properties in Stevenage as at 1 August 2025), SBC keeps £219.03 or only 11% of the total council tax bill as shown below.



4.8 Finance Settlement and assumptions in the MTFS

4.8.1 The funding assumptions in the MTFS have been updated using the lower level of fair funding increase as set out in para 4.5.1 together with an adjustment for business rates losses after the reset (for the first two years) and an allowance for the consultation changes such as the introduction of a ceiling on increases/longer transition period due to the level of gainers and losers.

4.8.2 The outcome of the consultation will not be known until circa October/November 2025 and the provisional funding settlement just before parliament rises on the 18 December 2025, therefore the CFO considers it prudent to revise down the numbers (as set out above) until clarification is given later in the year. The provisional settlement will be multi year and will mean the future years position will be clearer in terms of budget decisions.

Funding projections £'000	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total 2026/27-2028/29
Business Rates	(£4,090)				
Under indexing	(£529)				
Total Business Rates	(£4,619)				
Revenue Support Grant	(£149)				
New Homes Bonus (NHB)	(£97)				
Recovery Grant	(£284)	£0	£0	£0	

Funding projections £'000		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total 2026/27- 2028/29
NIC's (in net cost of services in 2025/26)	(£201)		£0	£0	£0	
Fair Funding			(£5,674)	(£5,997)	(£6,385)	
Loss of Business rates before safety net			£160	£160	£0	
Allowance for ceiling on gains after consultation			£500	£500	£500	
Total	(£5,349)		(£5,014)	(£5,337)	(£5,885)	(£16,236)
MTFS Assumptions			2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total 2026/27- 2028/29
Total			(£4,308)	(£4,389)	(£4,472)	(£13,169)
Increase 2026/27-2028/29						(£3,067)

- 4.8.3 The finance settlement is likely to roll in other grants such as temporary accommodation and Discretionary Housing payments (DHP) but these have not been factored into the numbers above until further clarification is given by the Government and they are currently assumed in the Net Cost of Services. While the simplification of grant funding is welcome the proposal for DHP is to retain the existing allocations for 2026/27 with the grant from 2027/28 allocated to upper tier Councils, this will be consulted on but means that the support currently given to help residents stay in their homes through DHP will be lost at a District level. The CFO will respond to the consultation once open and recommend that the existing funds are allocated as currently until LGR is implemented.
- 4.8.4 The MTFS also makes no assumption about '**Extended Producer Pays**' funding an initiative which the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) the amount is only guaranteed for 2025/26 (£1.078Million). A report to the July 2025 Cabinet set out how the money could be spent including improving flat block recycling. It is likely that further funding will be due in 2026/27, however there is no indication at the moment about the amount to be given and Members will be updated when further clarification is set out in the Finance Settlement.
- 4.8.5 From April 2026 Councils must collect weekly food waste, the MTFS assumes that the Council will be fully compensated by the government for the increased costs incurred. The Council has been notified of the 2025/26 grant determination (transitional grant) to support the implementation of weekly food waste collections which is insufficient to cover the estimated cost and representation has been made to DEFRA. The 2026/27 allocations will be included in the 2026/27 Finance Settlement (December 2025). An amount of the EPR grant has been held in the earmarked reserve to bridge the gap of any shortfall.
- 4.8.6 Included in the MTFS core resources are prior years gains and losses for council tax and business rates to/from the Collection Fund. When the budget for the year is set an estimate is made of business rates (NNDR1), this is revised as part of the following years return and again at the outturn for the year (NNDR3). The business rate adjustments are 'matched' by a transfer to/from the NNDR reserve as no gains are spent until realised and used for one off spend (with the exception of the £200K supporting General Fund services). Variations arose because:

- There was a significant adverse swing in business rates losses for 2023/24 (actual or NNDR 3) due a rating adjustment given by the valuation office which was significantly higher than expected. For note the actual loss was lower as the levy on gains reduced but this is paid to the government in the year it arose, (2023/24)
- There was a reduction in business rate gains for 2024/25 of £359K, however the gains achieved were still £893K.

4.8.7 The projected 2024/25 council tax deficit on the collection fund for SBC, (the approved taxbase less the raised in year and provision for bad debt) was predicted at £196K, however the actual 2024/25 deficit came in at only a £36K loss, which means there is a corresponding credit back to the General Fund in 2026/27.

Collection Fund Core Resource movements	2025/26	2026/27	Total
2023/24 Business rate losses (para. 4.8.6)	£1,056,964	£0	£1,056,964
2024/25 Business rate losses (para 4.8.6)	£175,793	£183,637	£359,430
2024/25 Council Tax (surplus)/deficit (para 4.8.7)	£196,632	(£160,330)	£36,302
Total	£1,429,389	£23,307	£1,452,696

4.8.8 Council tax surplus and deficits tend to be much smaller as they not complicated by NNDR appeals and large revaluations. No assumption has been made in the MTFS for changes to 2025/26 gains and losses for business rates and council tax, this will be reviewed later in the year (see also para 4.6.8 and para 4.7.2).

4.9 Balancing the Budget

4.9 1 Balancing the Budget is one of the Council's key Making Stevenage Even Better(MSEB) priorities to ensure that the Council remains financially resilient whilst striving to deliver against its service and high-level ambitions across both the General Fund and the HRA. Balancing the budget consists of four main streams and work on potential budget options is carried out all year round. The graphic below sets out the process for 2024/25 onwards.



- 4.9.3 **Business Change and digital (formally Transformation)** –Members approved a set of principles to be applied to securing improvements to customer access to services, through the use of digital design at the August 2021 Executive meeting Further reports were made to the Executive in October 2022 and September 2023, updating on the delivery so far. Customers are at the heart of the Council’s services, so the aim of the programme is to ensure that they will be served in a straightforward way, with resolution at the first point of contact and, where deemed possible, through the provision of easy to access online services that are so good, people choose to use them.
- 4.9.4 With the advent of LGR the programme has been redirected (under the New Assistant Director for Business Change and Digital) to focus on getting the Council ‘match fit’ for LGR through improving customer journeys through digital interventions but without the need for significant staff restructuring.
- 4.9.5 Some restructuring has been completed and an Officer Key Decision was taken 9 April 2025 following consultation with the Portfolio holders for Transforming Stevenage, Communications and Strategic Partnerships, Resources and Transformation, Environment and Performance, Co-operative Council and Neighbourhoods, Culture, Leisure and Wellbeing and Stronger Communities. The anticipated 2026/27 savings are circa £156K and £26K for the General Fund and HRA respectively and will contribute to the 2026/27 savings target.
- 4.9.6 In reducing the scope of the business change activity, the team has been ‘right sized’ with the additional ability to draw on the Business Change earmarked reserve for upfront investment or support, which stood at £773K at the 1 April 2025. This right sizing is anticipated to save the General Fund and HRA £262K and £57K respectively. A summary of the Business change savings is shown in the table below.

General Fund and HRA Business Change Savings £'000	2025/26		2026/27	
	General Fund	HRA	General Fund	HRA
Localities Review (reported quarter 1 monitoring report)	£123	£28	£156	£29
Right sizing the Business Change Team	£0	£0	£262	£57
Total	£123	£28	£418	£86

- 4.9.7 **Commercialisation & Insourcing** -The Council approved the latest Co-operative Commercial and Insourcing Strategy at the October 2023 Executive. This strategy set out a number of work streams which are overseen by an Executive working group.
- 4.9.8 A further update on the work arising from the Co-operative Commercial and Insourcing Strategy will be included in the November 2025 Balancing the Budget Report to the Cabinet. However, a number of commercial options have been identified through the Commercial Team, the work of the Estates Team and are summarised below.

General Fund Commercial Savings £'000	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Fees and charges (provisional and subject to approval October Cabinet)	£0	£314	£314
Taxi Licence fees to recover costs (provisional and subject to approval General Purposes October meeting)	£0	£44	£44

General Fund Commercial Savings £'000	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Commercial parking deal (reported Qrt 1 monitoring report)	£97	£100	£104
Commercial property lease rent renewals (reported Qrt 1 monitoring report)	£80	£106	£106
Additional income from billboards	£0	£13	£19
Additional income from parcel lockers	£0	£2	£5
Additional bus operator income above the budget (included in Qrt 1 monitoring report)	£16	£16	£16
Total	£193	£595	£608

4.9.9 **Efficiency savings** are reported and removed from the General Fund as part of the formal quarterly monitoring process and are included in the 1st Quarter monitoring report if identified. In addition, the star chamber review (see also para 4.10.5), identified a number of budget efficiencies some of which have been reported in the quarter one monitoring report to this meeting. A summary of the efficiency savings identified to date are shown in the table below and included in the MTFS totalling £121K for 2026/27.

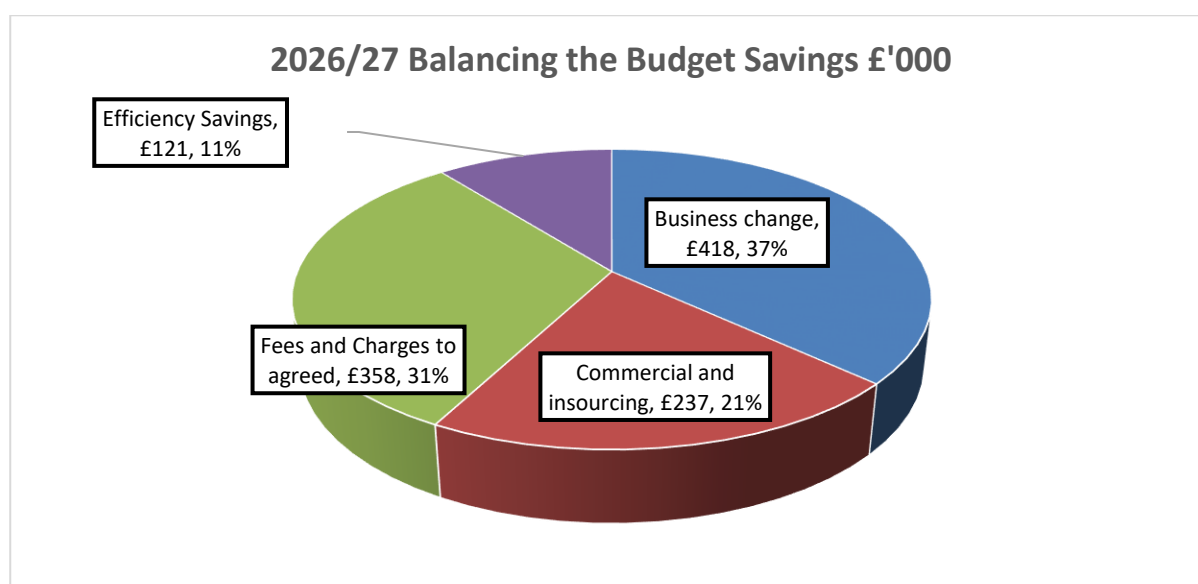
General Fund Efficiency Savings £'000	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
HCC agency agreement full increase not in budget	£20	£20	£20
Change acquirer bank for credit card payments resulting in savings.	£0	£18	£18
Director remuneration for Building Control Company (for attending meetings)	£11	£11	£11
External Audit fees budget not required	£16	£16	£16
Aligning Revenue and Benefits Court fees in line with previous actuals	£10	£10	£10
Align Shared Internal Audit Service budget	£6	£6	£6
Align Third party tipping income budget to current levels (reported quarter 1 monitoring)	£33	£33	£33
Review of cleaning contract prior to tender (reported quarter 1 monitoring)	£21	£28	£28
Review of software budgets and further utilisation of Microsoft 365		£49	£66
Removal of vacant post in ICT structure not required	£17	£17	£17
Budget insufficient for Waste Disposal costs increased and reported Quarter 1 monitoring)	(£49)	(£49)	(£49)
Budget insufficient for reletting of commercial properties (reported quarter 1 monitoring)	(£38)	(£38)	(£38)
Total	£47	£121	£138

4.9.10 If a funding gap is still identified for the General Fund after efficiencies, Business change and commercial, then the final lever is to reduce the level of **service provision**. However, the Fair Funding settlement set out in section 4.8 negates the need for any reduced service provision in 2026/27 supported by savings already identified above. Beyond 2026/27 there is a much lower target that could be met from future fees and charges increases. This is of course dependent on any growth approved and the actual numbers once known for Fair Funding 2.0.

4.9.11 There are other financial unknowns in addition to the finance settlement as set out in this report including:

- If inflationary pressures exceed that included in the MTFS (see section 4.1 and 4.2) and significantly if higher pay awards are agreed if inflation remains above the assumptions in the MTFS
- The impact of LGR and the ability to attract and retain staff in the interim period to LGR and or if it drives higher salaries.
- Higher transition costs into LGR requiring further General Fund contributions
- The pension scheme triennial review is due for 2026/27 this could increase the cost of employer's contributions beyond that included in the MTFS (£100K).
- The General Fund recharges circa £9Million in recharges to the HRA and the HRA requires significant levels of savings per year circa £2Million and may need the General Fund to reduce support costs.
- The cost of collecting food waste is higher than the grant awarded in the finance settlement
- Savings set out above may change between now and budget setting

4.9.12 A chart of the savings options identified and included in the MTFS are summarised below (subject to Fees and Charges being agreed at the October Cabinet and General Purposes Committee).



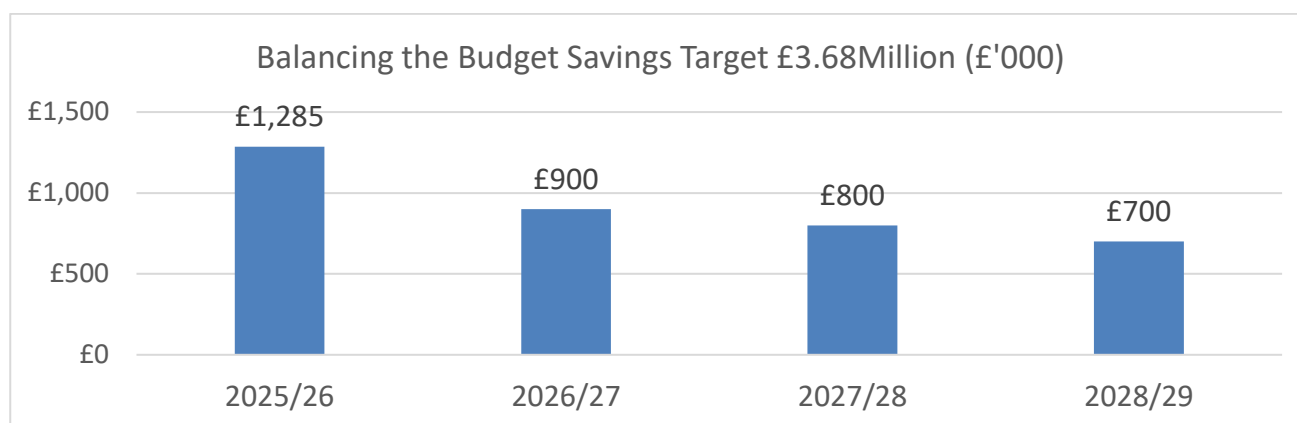
4.9.13 A further report will be presented to the November 2025 Cabinet on any other savings options that have arisen as part of the officer star chamber process together with growth proposals. This MTFS is different in tone to previous reports in that the financial position of the Council is projected to be greatly improved as a result of the Fair Funding projections. However, there is uncertainty in not knowing the actual financial benefit until mid December 2025, at which point Members may wish to consider additional capital and revenue one off growth. In particular, capital funding has been severely restricted in recent years, and the CFO recommends that:

- identify further available cash balances to supplement the 2026/27 capital programme once the funding position becomes clear
- Future savings targets are reduced

- One off revenue projects are considered in line with Council's priorities
- Consideration is given to increasing balances to ensure the financial resilience for LGR

4.10 Balancing the Budget Target

4.10.1 The General Fund MTFS has had to set an annual Balancing the Budget savings target due to the gap between funding and expenditure as set out in section 3 of this report. The target prior to any positive impact of Fair Funding was £2.4Million for the period 2026/27-2028/29 as shown below (as published in the Final General Fund and Council Tax Setting 2025/26 to the February Cabinet.



4.10.2 In setting the savings target, consideration needs to be given as to whether the target sum is achievable in any given year versus setting an amount which delivers no draw on balances. This should be done whilst at the same time, ensuring the Council is still able to deliver on its priorities and that a budget can be set with a prudent level of balances. However, the change in government funding as set out in section 4.8 considerably alters the need for significant savings as even on a prudent estimate that funding will increase a total of £3.067Million (para. 4.8.2).

4.10.3 Set out in section 4.9 are savings already identified of £1.034Million which is higher than the original 2026/27 target of £900K, (but does include fees and charges yet to be approved and estimated only at this stage). Any further Balancing the Budget savings identified for 2026/27 will further lower future saving targets. While the savings targets mean there is a contribution to balances (based on current projections), there are a number of things to consider:

1. Fair Funding may be less than that included in the MTFS
2. Windfall NNDR receipts have been used for a number of initiatives such as Regeneration including funding the Swingate equity share, Apprentice scheme and the financial resilience of the General Fund it is unlikely there will be gains for a few years due to the reset and increase in tariff. This means those type of projects will need to be funded from the General Fund resources. The CFO recommends the £150K per year required from balances 2025/26-2029/30 is included in the MTFS

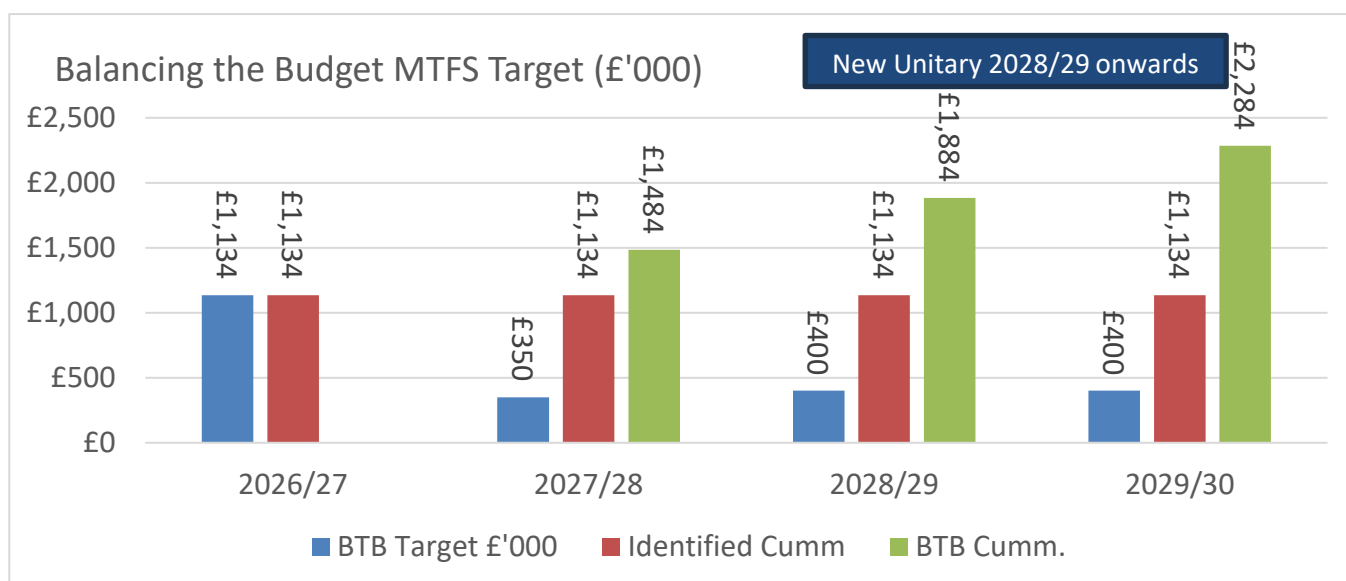
Apprentice Scheme approved 2024/25 Budget setting	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
Cost per year		£203	£255	£301	£308	£315	£1,381
Funded by:							
NNDR Reserve	£0	(£203)	(£255)	(£301)	£0	£0	(£758)
Underspend General Fund	(£150)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£150)
Recommended use of budgeted General Fund reserves	£0	(£150)	(£150)	(£150)	(£23)	£0	(£473)
Total Income	(£150)	(£353)	(£405)	(£451)	(£23)	£0	(£1,381)

3. There is a need to fund the Community and Retail cost of the redevelopment at the Oval (General Fund assets) and indicative numbers (subject to the final capital bid) could require borrowing costs of £303K per annum by 2029/30. The CFO recommends the indicative borrowing costs are included in the MTFS or the identified Capital of £5.5Million set aside in full or part from any available cash balances.

Indicative costs of Oval Redevelopment for the General Fund	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Loans to support Capital	£137,500	£275,000	£275,000
Minimum revenue Provision			£137,500
Higher rental income offsetting borrowing costs Yr 1			(£108,750)
Total	£137,500	£275,000	£303,750

4. Capital funding has been severely restricted and having available reserves in the General Fund would allow some limited capital investment the CFO recommends that the capital bids are reviewed in October/November to identify schemes that could be funded from revenue if recommended and officers will consult with Members on options to be considered
5. Revenue spend has also been curtailed and consideration could be given to some spend on Council priorities and officers will consult with Members on options to be considered
6. The Council's retail and residential income strip Queensway LLP faces a challenging retail environment as set out in the part two report to this Cabinet and the CFO recommends an additional £50K per year is set aside in the Queensway earmarked reserve to support the company
7. The costs going into LGR could be higher than assumed in the MTFS at £150K per year from 2026/27 (assumed in MTFS)
8. Borrowing is required for the new Leisure Centre (report to the October 2025 Cabinet) which is reliant on the improvement in the management fee having headroom in the General Fund would ensure borrowing head room.

4.10.4 The proposed savings targets for 2026/27 onwards are set out below taking into account the need to potentially fund some of the spend set out in para. 4.10.3 with the 2026/27 surplus projected (para. 4.11.12) allowing for further one off spend on capital and revenue priorities once the provisional settlement has been received. The savings targets beyond 2027/28 will if the timetable is followed be the preserve of the new unitary Council, however officers and Members will want to ensure the new Council is financially resilient. The level of savings 2027/28 onwards equates roughly to the annual fees and charges increases.



4.10.5 The Council's Senior Leadership Team held 'Star Chamber' sessions in June 2025 and there are a number of further saving and growth items still to be finalised and these will be presented to the November 2025 Cabinet for consideration and approval. Members should note there is a growth allowance of £75K each year in the MTFS, which includes any support for the 80th Stevenage Anniversary .

4.10.6 This prudent approach to looking beyond the next year in conjunction with the BTB work streams will enable the Council to achieve a level of savings whilst continuing to deliver on priorities and potentially headroom to fund the Council's priorities such as the General Fund element of the regeneration of the Oval.

4.10.7 This level of savings target will be more achievable than in future years if annual fees and charges increases of circa £320K per year are agreed, together with the certainty of a multi- year-settlement.

4.11 General Fund Balances and Reserves in the MTFS

4.11.1 Council's General Fund reserves are classified as either general or as being held for a specific purpose. The General Fund or the Council's main reserve is designed to cushion the impact of unexpected events/emergencies and to help absorb the impact of uneven cash flows.

4.11.2 The Council's General Fund balances projected in the MTFS are summarised in the table below and include the recommended budget items:

1. Inclusion of apprentice scheme assumed funding from underspends not budgeted for (para.4.10.3 (2))
2. Inclusion of indicative General Fund Oval redevelopment borrowing costs (para 4.10.3 (3))
3. Inclusion of a further £50K per year for the Queensway LLP (para 4.10.3 (6))
4. Includes BTB savings of £1.15Million between 2027/28-2029/30.

General Fund balances	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
Opening Balance	£6,506	£6,550	£7,300	£7,574	£7,902
In Year	£45	£750	£275	£328	(£16)
Closing Balance	£6,550	£7,300	£7,574	£7,902	£7,887

4.11.3 Guidance issued by CIPFA emphasises this requirement, particularly in light of the responsibilities placed upon the S151 Officer on an annual basis (under the Local Government Act 2003), to report on the adequacy of proposed reserves when Council sets the council tax for the forthcoming year.

4.11.4 The Act includes a reserve power for government to lay down the minimum reserves local authorities must allow for when they set their budgets. It is therefore expected, that authorities will have regard to the CIPFA guidance when considering the adequacy of balances and allocated reserves.

4.11.5 Reserves can be held for three main purposes:

- A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing;
- A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies; and
- A means of building up funds to meet known or predicted liabilities (this is often referred to as allocated reserves).

4.11.6 In order to assess the adequacy of unallocated general reserves when setting the budget, the CFO must take account of the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the authority.

4.11.7 In terms of determining the level of general balances, the CFO has based her advice on consideration of the factors included in the table below which projects a £3.57Million (2025/26 £3.45Million) minimum level. This assessment is indicative at the current time and will be further reviewed as part of the budget setting process and is significantly lower than the projected level of balances in the MTFS.

General Fund balances Minimum Level Assessment	2025/26 £Million
Amount to cover a 1.5% overrun in gross expenditure	£1.02
Amount to cover a 1.5% overrun in gross income	£0.85
Amount to cover pay award above the budgeted amount	£0.80
Amount to cover higher prices with higher than forecast inflation	£0.50
Amount to cover fee and charges losses through price fluctuation	£0.30
Amount to cover risk of higher LGR transition costs	£0.10
Total Estimated General Fund Reserves	£3.57

4.12 Allocated Reserves

4.12.1 The Council's Allocated revenue reserve projections are summarised in the table below. The reserves have been categorised as being allocated for a specific use or available to support the General Fund.

Reserves £'000	Closing 2024/25	Use	Closing 2025/26	Use	Closing 2026/27
NHB reserve	(£10)	£0	(£10)	£0	(£10)
Transformation Reserve	(£773)	£9	(£764)	£0	(£764)
Homeless reserve	(£420)	£0	(£420)	£0	(£420)
Planning Delivery	(£198)	£95	(£103)	£0	(£103)
Queensway Reserve	(£215)	(£193)	(£408)	(£293)	(£701)
Regeneration Reserve	(£245)	£107	(£139)	£0	(£139)
Town Centre Reserve	(£0)	(£56)	(£56)	£0	(£56)
Town square reserve	(£1,711)	(£23)	(£1,735)	£130	(£1,605)
Insurance reserve	(£62)	£0	(£62)	£0	(£62)
ICT reserve	(£142)	£0	(£142)	£0	(£142)
Leisure Reserve	(£219)	£219	£0	£0	£0
Stevenage works	(£20)	£0	(£20)	£0	(£20)
Asylum seekers reserve	(£147)	£0	(£147)	£0	(£147)
Future Councils reserve	(£198)	£198	(£0)	£0	(£0)
Commercial Property repair reserve	(£41)	£0	(£41)	£0	(£41)
Home office funding for Refugees	(£870)	£0	(£870)	£0	(£870)
Domestic abuse reserve	(£196)	£0	(£196)	£0	(£196)
Extended Producer Pays grant	£0	(£229)	(£229)	£0	(£229)
Elections Reserve	£0	(£50)	(£50)	£50	£0
Apprentice Reserve	(£150)	(£150)	(£300)	(£150)	(£450)
Total Allocated for use	(£5,617)	(£73)	(£5,690)	(£263)	(£5,953)
Gains (NNDR)	(£4,580)	£647	(£3,933)	£540	(£3,393)
Income equalisation Reserve	(£758)	£200	(£558)	£0	(£558)
Total Available to support the GF	(£5,338)	£847	(£4,491)	£540	(£3,951)
Total allocated reserves	(£10,955)	£774	(£10,181)	£277	(£9,904)

- 4.12.2 There are balances of £3.951Million estimated at the end of 2026/27 in the NNDR business rates gains reserve, but this includes ‘unrealised’ gains and future approved commitments which is summarised below.

NNDR Gains Reserve £'000	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Opening Balance	(£4,580)	(£2,893)	(£2,354)
Return of NNDR reduced 2023/24 gains	£1,057	£0	£0
Return of NNDR reduced 2024/25 gains	£176	£184	£0
Cost of Swingate LLP Equity share loss of interest	£251	£102	£0
Graduate Scheme	£203	£255	£301
Total Commitments or use of reserves	£1,687	£540	£301
Balance before Unrealised gains	(£2,893)	(£2,354)	(£2,053)
Unrealised gains:			
Opening Balance Unrealised Gains:		(£1,040)	(£1,040)
2025/26 gains not yet realised transferred to reserve	(£1,040)		
Gains from Swingate LLP			(£1,742)
Total Unrealised Gains	(£1,040)	(£1,040)	(£2,782)
Total Reserve Balance including realised gains	(£3,933)	(£3,393)	(£4,835)

- 4.12.3 The table above identifies there is circa £2Million that could be utilised for key priorities particularly if the Council's government funding position is realised as set out in para. 4.8.2. However, Members should note that as a result of the Fair Funding changes new gains are likely not to be replicated in the medium term, (see also para 4.6.4-4.6.5).
- 4.12.4 The Council also has an income equalisation reserve with a total of £558K as at 31 March 2027, this reserve can be used if fees and charge are impacted such as recycles and parking income.
- 4.12.5 The remaining earmarked reserves are held for a number of specific reasons such as the holding costs of the regeneration sites in Town Square and to support the Council's Queensway LLP asset holding to maintain its financial resilience. The CFO will review the earmarked reserves between the MTFS and budget to determine whether all the balances are still required.

4.13 CFO commentary

- 4.13.1 The MTFS projects that 2026/27 general balances will be well above minimum levels - positively impacted by the changes to government funding and the level of balancing the budget savings identified to date. However, the General Fund and Council faces a level of financial uncertainty including for the reasons set out below:
- The consultation on Fair Funding has only just concluded and could change, the CFO has taken a prudent view to future years government support and should the position become clearer those monies will be available to fund priorities.
 - LGR means a shadow authority could be in place for 2027/28, the final LGR proposal has yet to be submitted (November 2025) and there will be a level of one off and transition cost that need to be funded. The Council's finances should remain financially resilient to absorb these up-front costs as part of the new unitary.

- There is a potential on-going risk to income streams from higher cost of living and specifically parking income may not fully recover to pre-pandemic levels. The Council holds an income equalisation reserve to neutralise this impact in medium term.
- The 2025/26 pay negotiations settled at 3.2% and a lower amount of 2.75% has been included in the MTFs for 2026/27, the impact of the living wage on the national pay scales and a higher cost of living may lead to higher pay settlements that budgeted.

4.13.2 Growth should be limited to that which is necessary to deliver the Council's top priorities based on the ability to deliver the existing Corporate Plan commitments to ensure there is sufficient monies to maintain the resilience of the new unitary authority Stevenage becomes part of. There may be some opportunity to use balances to support capital bids which have been severely curtailed due to a lack of funding and a report will be presented to a later Cabinet meeting.

4.14 Approach to Consultation

4.14.1 The Council consulted on the 2025/26 budget via an on-line form on the SBC's website the responses were a small sample of 30 so not statistically sound. The growth for apprentices was supported and the graffiti growth was only narrowly not supported.

2025/26 Budget Feedback	Yes	No
Stevenage Resident	87%	13%
Stevenage business owner	3%	97%
Agree to increase council tax by 3%	63%	37%
Pay more council tax for more services	43%	57%
Support Apprentice growth	70%	30%
Support graffiti growth	47%	53%
Support savings delivered through more digital and on-line	67%	33%
savings delivered from more commercial income	40%	60%
Only cutting services if no other options available	67%	33%

4.14.2 The consultation asked respondents to comment on future areas to invest in and the following areas were identified in a free form text box, with Council responses in *italics* to the comments.

- Improving the Town Centre and parks and open spaces- *the Council has a regeneration programme for the Town Centre and work has started on the former Swingate site in 2024. The Council is working on both a Green Spaces and Trees & Woodland strategy which will be reported to cabinet in the summer of 2025. This will outline our approach to enhance our parks and open spaces going forward. The Council will also be spending an estimated £830K on parks and open spaces in 2025/26*
- Pavements cleaning generally and landscaping and maintaining the overall appearance of the streets across the town. –*Funding from the UK Shared*

Prosperity Fund has been utilised to undertake an enhanced cleansing routine of Stevenage's neighbourhood centres and pathways over the last two years. The Council will also be spending £1.5Million in 2025/26 on street cleansing and litter picking.

- *Hedge and verge trimming to keep cycleways clear and accessible. -The council is currently delivering a 10-year programmed Shrub Bed Improvement programme to remove old, tired, or operationally constrictive shrub beds to help keep pathways and cycleways clear and accessible.*
- *Regeneration culture and leisure -The Council has jointly invested in a JV with their Development Partner Mace to build new homes in the town centre and has consulted the public on a new leisure centre.*
- *Solar panels to reduce energy costs. Improved bus service so residents are less reliant on cars.- The Council has installed solar panels on refuse freighters and new buildings such as the bus interchange.*
- *Council housing- The Council is investing £51Million into existing and new homes in 2025/26*
- *Town centre events - make the space more welcoming out of hours and provide a safer environment to encourage more evening venues- The council has invested in 'Events Island' in the Town Centre and has a programme of events throughout the year.*
- *more investment in digital logging/ online services -The Council has a digital team and Transformation Plan to improve the on-line offer.*

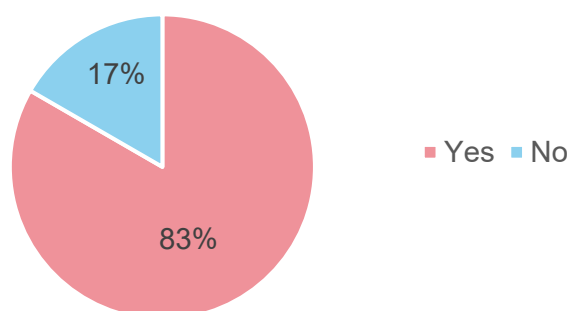
4.14.3 The consultation also asked respondents what areas the council should make savings in the future:

- *High street- The Council is working with businesses in the Indoor Market to transfer their services into the empty shopping units along the new Park Place development in the town centre. This will bring greater attention to local businesses in the council's high street. This builds on the new 'Event Island' space in the town centre, which has a busy event schedule throughout the coming year.*
- *Repairs -Members approved a further £2Million spend on council home repairs in 2025/26.*
- *Council should use the staff they currently have to tackle the graffiti problem in the town and invest in more artwork in underpasses to prevent it- The Council successfully tested an enhanced Graffiti response, utilising funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund over the last year. This growth request establishes that level of response within core budgets going forward rather than relying on time limited external funding. The Council has a programme of artwork installations in underpasses and buildings as part of the Councils Towns Fund works.*
- *Black bin collection once a month- In setting the frequency of residual waste collections, Council's need to consider a range of factors including the size of the bin, the number of occupants and storage facilities, for example, the Council wants to increase recycling rates and reduce residual waste volumes going forwards, and will be looking to improve recycling facilities in a number of locations, including flat blocks.*
- *Stop investing in car infrastructure – The Council has invested in the Stevenage cycle ways through the new Arts & Heritage trail as part of its ambitious Regeneration programme of the town centre. This reemphasises the council's commitment and investment into alternative travel options in the town.*

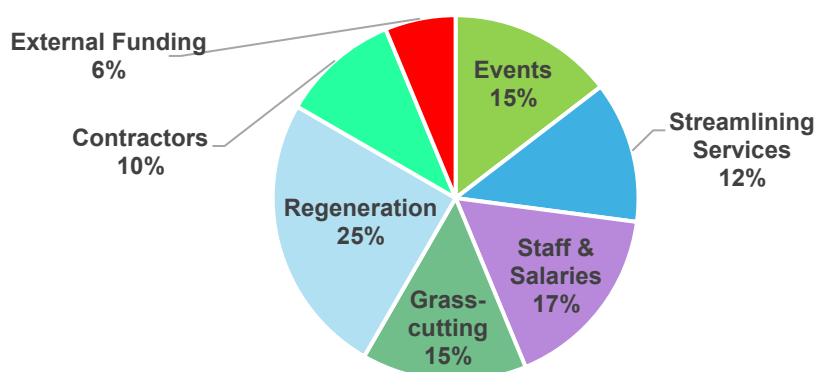
- Outdated and incompatible ICT systems *The Council along with East Herts Authority have jointly invested in the shared ICT service in 2024/25 & 2025/26 to ensure that both Councils have fit for purpose software.*
- Staffing and pensions -*staff pay is governed by the collective pay agreements as agreed with the unions.*

4.14.4 Development of the Councils 2024/25 Corporate Plan included a period of public and stakeholder engagement and consultation to include ascertaining if:

- Agree that Balancing the Budget should be a priority so that the Council can remain financially resilient and continue to deliver key services as set out in the Corporate Plan?
- If no, is the alternative is to reduce services and provide less?
- If yes, what should the Council stop doing to generate £1.23Million savings?
- 83% of respondents to the consultation agreed that Balancing the Budget should be a priority:



4.14.5 All survey respondents were asked for financial savings suggestions. The responses can be categorised into seven themes:



- The Transforming Our Town programme will attract new businesses to the area which would increase business rate revenue and car parking income (25%). – *The Council has opened a new Multi Storey car park and is working with partners to bring new business into the town, also improving the business rates collected and retained by the Council.*
- Reduce Staff and Councillor salaries (17%). – *The Council's Member allowances are reviewed and agreed by an Independent Remuneration Panel and staff pay is governed by the collective pay agreements as agreed with the unions.*

- The Council should consider selective grass-cutting allowing green spaces to grow wilder (within safe reasons) and reduce maintenance costs for grass cutting etc. (15%) – *The Council has already implemented this as a measure with an associated cost reduction.*
- Streamlining services (12%) – *The Council has a business change programme which is targeted at streamlining processes and reducing costs.*
- Reduce use of Contractors (10%) – *The Council has a Commercial and Insourcing Strategy which includes reviewing contracts to see if they can be brought back in-house where deemed viable to do so at the point of re-tendering.*
- Reducing or cancelling events such as the November Fireworks Display, or those held on the Event Island and the Stevenage Museum. (15%) – *the Council has been looking at how it manages and delivers future event activity with a view to driving out efficiencies where possible.*
- Seeking external funding to plug the financial gap (6%). *The Council has actively sought external funding and has received circa £80Million of revenue and capital funding over the last few years.*

Resident Survey (2021)

4.14.6 The 2021/22 Residents survey shows that resident's preferences with regards to achieving budget savings are firstly to reduce costs through the provision of more online services. This was ranked the highest (out of five options in 2021 and 2017) with 41%. This first rate ranking has increased from 2017 and supports the Transformation programme as a method to reduce costs and improve efficiency / productivity.

Please tell us your order of preference for each of the following options by ordering them 1 to 5	2021 rank	2017 rank	1st
Reduce time and money spent on paperwork by interacting with more residents and customers online	1	1	41%
Increase income from fees and chargeable services, to keep the council's element of Council Tax as low as possible	2	3	24%
Spend less by reducing or cutting the services that you tell us are not a priority	3	2	16%
Make money by selling more of our services to residents and customers	4	5	9%
Increase our element of Council Tax (for example from 51p per day to 55p per day)	5	4	10%

4.14.7 The 2021 residents' survey asked residents whether the council tax represented value for money. While strongly disagree has increased (from 7% to 15%), overall 52% up from 46% of residents agree it represents value for money as shown in the chart below.

	Responses	2021	2017	2015	2013	2011
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council Tax paid to Stevenage Borough Council provides good value for money?	Strongly agree	16%	10%	7%	6%	6%
	Tend to agree	36%	36%	39%	39%	40%
	Neither	18%	30%	30%	35%	33%
	Tend to disagree	10%	17%	18%	17%	16%
	Strongly disagree	15%	7%	6%	5%	5%

	Responses	2021	2017	2015	2013	2011
	Don't know (DNRO)	4%				
	Summary: Agree	52%	46%	46%	45%	46%
	Summary: Disagree	26%	24%	24%	22%	21%

4.14.8 The Council has commissioned a new Residents survey in 2025/26 the results of which will be shared with Members in due course.

4.14.9 The CFO has responded to the Fair Funding Consultation broadly supporting the proposals and a number of further questions were asked with the response shown below.

Question	Consultation Response
Do you agree with the government's plans to simplify the grant landscape?	SBC agrees as it will reduce the effort of grant chasing and allows LA's to use the funding most appropriately at a local level. There is some concern about combining upper and lower tier grants such as the DHP which is used to support those stay in their accommodation and this grant is being combined with an upper tier grant so concern over its distribution methodology going forward
What measures could the government use to incentivise local authorities to specifically support affordable and sub-market housing?:	Lower borrowing for HRA's who now have significantly higher borrowing costs even with the enhanced rates. When the self financing deal was done SBC's average borrowing rate was 3.42% borrowing and as at August 25 year money is 5.79% (including the preferential rate -0.6%) which is a significant burden for HRA's So for HRA and regeneration projects including residential, lower borrowing rates are required. The Council has benefited from Homes England funding for 2 schemes in Stevenage Brent Court and Oval and more of that would be welcome Writing off of some self financing debt would allow affordable headroom to build, to date SBC has built over 500 homes but could do with less historic debt lower borrowing rates as the increased cost of building safety is reducing the ability to build more homes through borrowing combined with higher interest rates
Are there any further flexibilities that you think could support local decision-making during the transitional period?	Council's really need early certainty we are all interpreting the data and models produce different answers which means knowing in December is too late for setting a balanced budget for the next year. In addition the 3 year period crosses LGR year 1 timetable and under current funding splitting the Counties funding between different options is difficult and may lead to different outcomes based on current funding assumptions. This because it is difficult to interpret and model and different sector consultants have different funding outcomes and then translating that to different unitary LA's overlays another complexity

Question	Consultation Response
Do you agree that the government should work to reduce unnecessary or disproportionate burden created by statutory duties?	The current format of the Statement of Accounts it provides zero transparency to residents and it costs the taxpayer circa £250K per year that's the equivalent of over 3% on council tax. The simplification has been promised and hasn't happened, in addition Councils have to get valuers to value assets like swimming pools and offices that are held for operational use and then the value is disputed by external audit valuers and then the annual audit bill is increased

4.15 Decision Making Process

4.15.1 It is currently planned that the following approval process will be followed:

Date	Meeting	Report
Oct-25	Cabinet	2026/27 Fees and Charges
	Overview and Scrutiny	2026/27 Fees and Charges
Nov-25	Cabinet	Balancing the Budget Report with the savings proposals for the General Fund and HRA
	Overview and Scrutiny	Balancing the Budget Report with the savings proposals for the General Fund and HRA
Dec-25	Cabinet	Draft 2026/27 HRA budget and rent setting report
	Overview and Scrutiny	Draft 2026/27 HRA budget and rent setting report
Jan-26	Cabinet	Final 2026/27 HRA budget and rent setting report Draft 2026/27 General Fund budget, Council Tax and Council Tax Support
	Overview and Scrutiny	Draft 2026/27 General Fund budget, Council Tax and Council Tax Support
	Council	Final 2026/27 HRA budget and rent setting report
Feb-26	Cabinet	Final 2026/27 General Fund budget, Council Tax and Council Tax Support
	Overview and Scrutiny	Final 2026/27 General Fund budget, Council Tax and Council Tax Support
	Council	Final 2026/27 General Fund budget, Council Tax and Council Tax Support

4.15.2 Following the approval of the proposed options for 2026/27, the Council will have an obligation to begin consultation with staff and partners.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

5.1.1 The CFO view is set out within this report. The impact of LGR has had a positive impact on the Council's finances with a contribution to balances in the medium term.

5.2. Legal Implications

5.2.1 The objective of this report is to outline a MTFS and forecast for the next five years. There are no legal implications at this stage of the planning cycle, however, Members are reminded of their duty to set a balanced budget.

5.2.2 Balancing the Budget savings options considered will have due regard to any consultation carried out, if consultation is required.

5.3. Risk Implications

5.3.1 A review of the risks facing the General Fund budgets has been listed in the table below, not all the impacts are known at the present time. The current MTFS projections are based on prudent assumptions and include the CFO's best assessment of the financial risks. However, if any of these risks become a reality then the MTFS will need to be updated once the actual impacts are known.

Risk Area	Risk Mitigation	Likelihood	Impact
Anticipated savings options not achieved (Negative Risk) –agreed options do not deliver expected level of savings either on a one-off basis or On-going.	Regular monitoring and reporting takes place, but the size of the net budget reductions increases the risk into the future. Non achievement of options would require other options to be brought forward. General Fund reserves should be held to ensure that decisions to reduce net costs are taken in a considered manner. This may become more of a risk as options around commercialisation are explored.	Medium	Medium
Council Tax Support (CTS) (Negative Risk) – increased demand is under- estimated.	An increase in demand would impact on future years as the deficit in the collection fund would need to be repaid by the General Fund. However, the modelling in the MTFS leaves the higher level of CTS caseload	Medium	Medium
Council Tax collection rates remain lower and the taxbase is reduced	The trend has been towards lower collection rates and this could mean the amount included in the taxbase will need to increase for bad debt. The CFO is tracking trends across other Herts Councils	High	Medium

Risk Area	Risk Mitigation	Likelihood	Impact
	and looking at measures to reduce arrears		
Localisation of Business Rates (Potential Negative) – A major employer leaves the town and impacts the business rate yield due to the Council	Negative: The safety net means a maximum loss in year of £160K which the council has included in core resources.	Medium	Medium
Loss of Business Rates due to Companies going into administration	As above.	Medium	Medium
The NDR Check Challenge Appeal process impacts on the Council's baseline assessment and increases the level of successful appeals and reduces the yield (Negative risk)	Officers will be monitoring changes to the NDR system and will be talking to the Valuation office. However, since the system has been introduced. There are still appeals outstanding on the 2017 list and the revaluation for 2023 has seen an increase in business rates which inevitably will lead to an increase in appeals for the new list.	Medium	Medium
Recession risk due to high inflation	General balances are risk assessed to ensure overall levels are maintained that meet an in-year short fall in income and higher costs. In addition the Council has an income equalisation reserve to mitigate against fluctuating income levels.	Medium	High
Impact of Future Welfare Reforms (Negative Risk) – There could be an increase in the need for the council's services requiring additional resources to be put into those services	Regular monitoring and reporting and the council has a welfare reform group which monitors impacts.	Medium	Medium
All MTFS risks not adequately identified (Negative or Positive Risk) – Financial risks and their timing are not accurately judged leading to either a pressure or benefit to the MTFS.	Council's risk management framework ensures operational and strategic risks are identified as part of the annual service and MTFS planning process.	Low	High

Risk Area	Risk Mitigation	Likelihood	Impact
Impact of future years capital programme (Negative) There could be increased pressure from the capital programme on the General Fund.	There is a robust challenge process for capital bids. Officers will be required to confirm that resources are in place to deliver any approved spend. With the new funding arrangements from 2026/27 there may be an opportunity to increase revenue funding to capital.	Medium	High
The Council's regeneration of SG1 increases the financial resources the Council must find.	The Council has already approved the use of ring fenced NDR gains for this purpose and the MTFS recommends this continues. The Council has identified NDR reserves to support the holding costs associated with the Swingate site in conjunction with Mace.	High	High
Fees and Charges target may not be reached (negative risk)	Non achievement of the target may require other options to be brought forward, for future years. But the Council has an income equalisation reserve to meet in year losses and an assumption is also contained within the minimum level of balances to meet an in year loss.	High	High
Homeless Bed and Breakfast costs increase	A budget of £80K budget is included within the General Fund for this.	Medium	Medium

5.4. Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.4.1 The Council has committed itself to providing high quality services that are relevant to the needs and responsive to the views of all sections of the local community, irrespective of their race, gender, disability, culture, religion, age, sexual orientation or marital status. The General Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in the exercise of its functions. The Equality Duty and the impact of decisions on people with protected characteristics must be considered by decision makers before making relevant decisions, including budget savings.
- 5.4.2 The process used to develop the Council's budget has been designed to ensure appropriate measures are in place to ensure the impact of decisions on the community is considered as part of the decision making process. It is officers' view that undertaking an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIAs) on the strategy is not appropriate at this stage. EqIAs will be done on individual savings proposals (when relevant) at an early stage in

the budget savings process to aid decision makers in their consideration of the Equality Duty. This work is being planned into the budget setting process.

5.5. Policy Implications

- 5.5.1 The approval of the revised budget framework includes a link for the Council's service planning requirements to ensure service priorities are identified. In addition, the budget framework represents a development of a policy led budgeting approach across Council services and the overall Financial Strategy.

5.6 Staffing and Accommodation Implications

- 5.6.1 There are no staffing implications in this report, other than the localities review set out in para. 4.9.5.

5.7 Climate Change Implications

- 5.7.1 The Budget and Policy setting process has prioritised growth for climate change as part of the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 budget setting process. However, there will be a need to provide more resource than is currently included in the budget to meet the 2030 deadline. The 2025/26 process should have due regard for climate change implications based on the Council's approved Climate Change Strategy.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

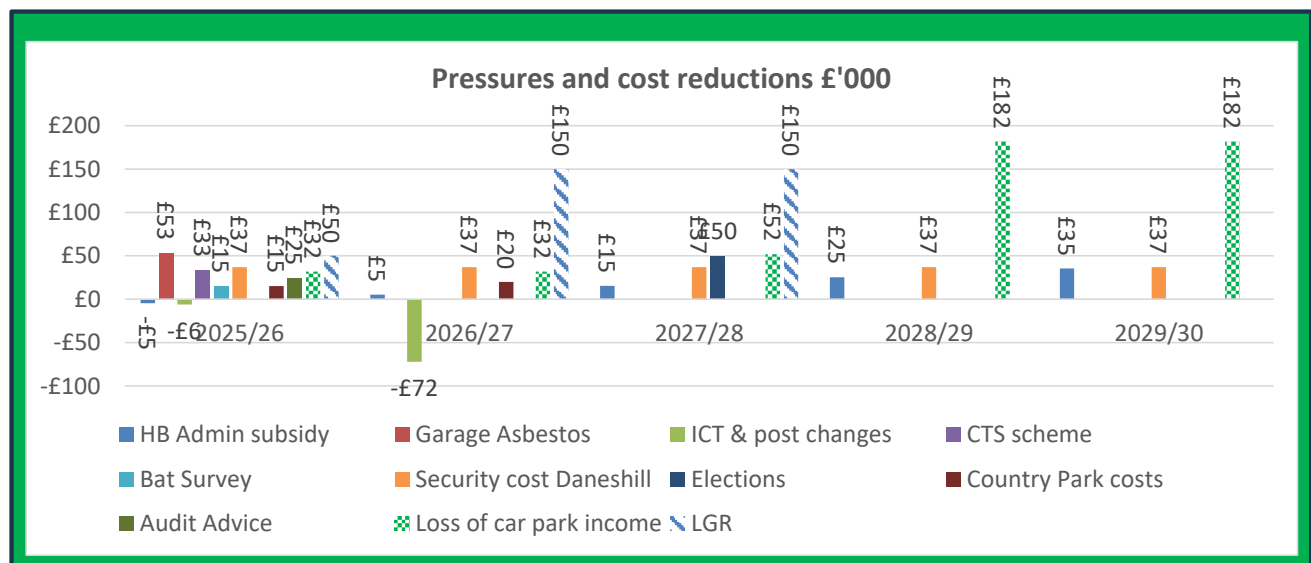
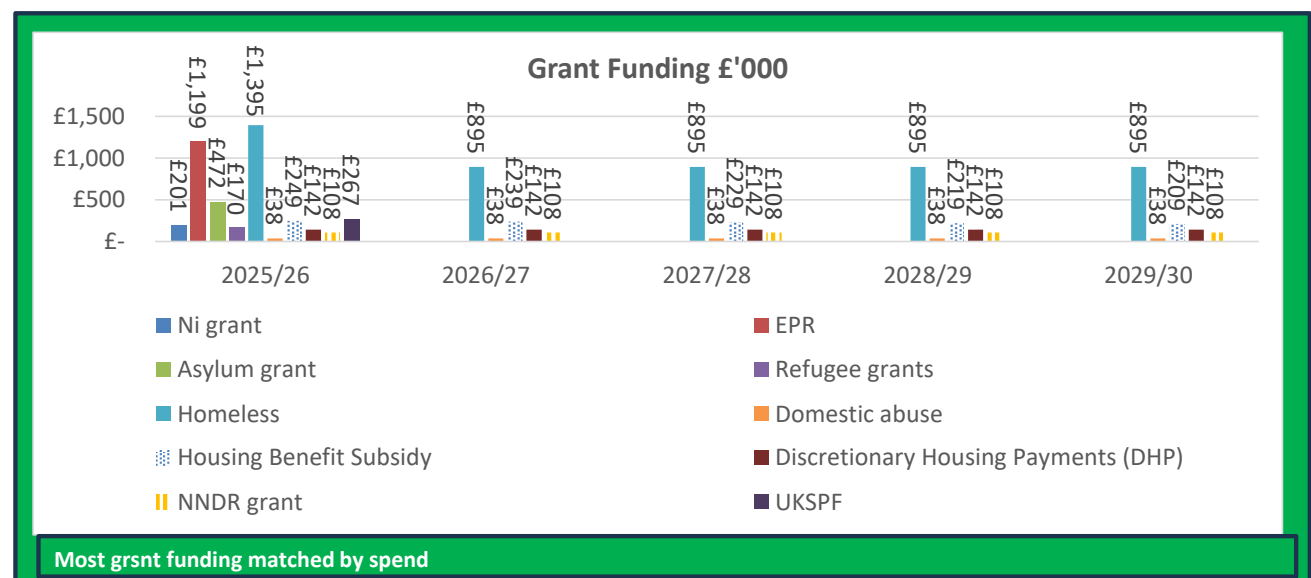
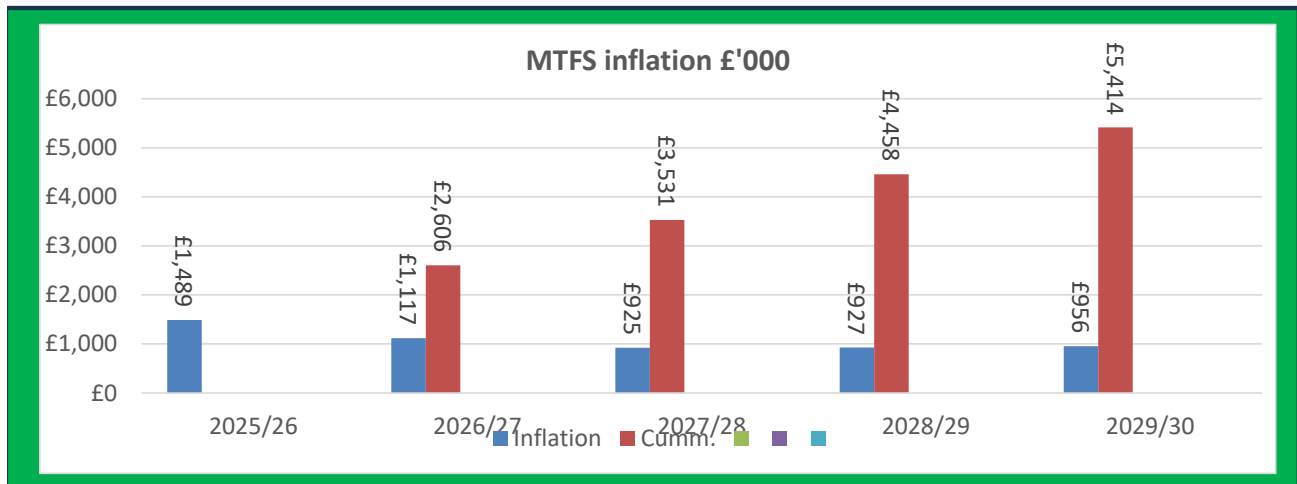
BD1 – 2024 September MTFS Strategy

APPENDICES

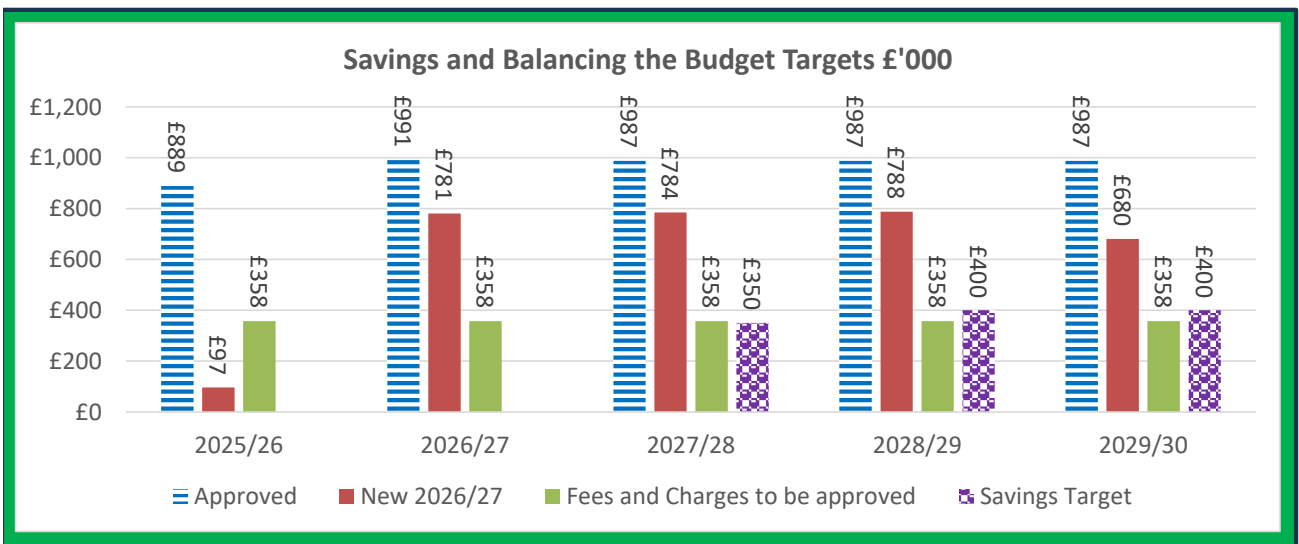
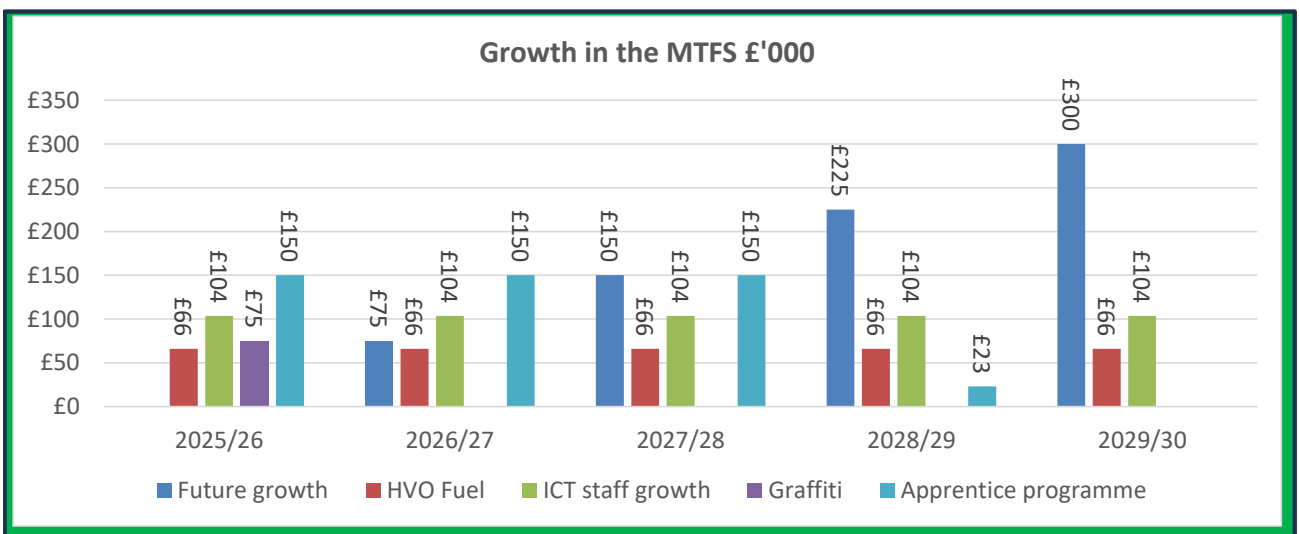
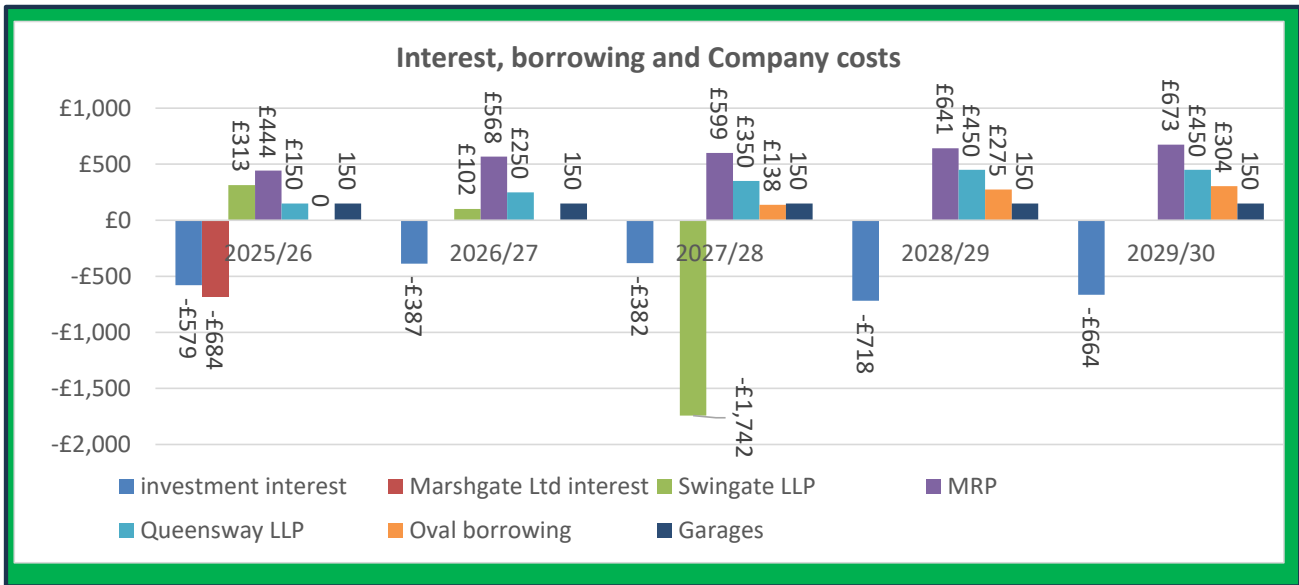
Appendix A MTFS

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MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26-2029/30 Appendix A

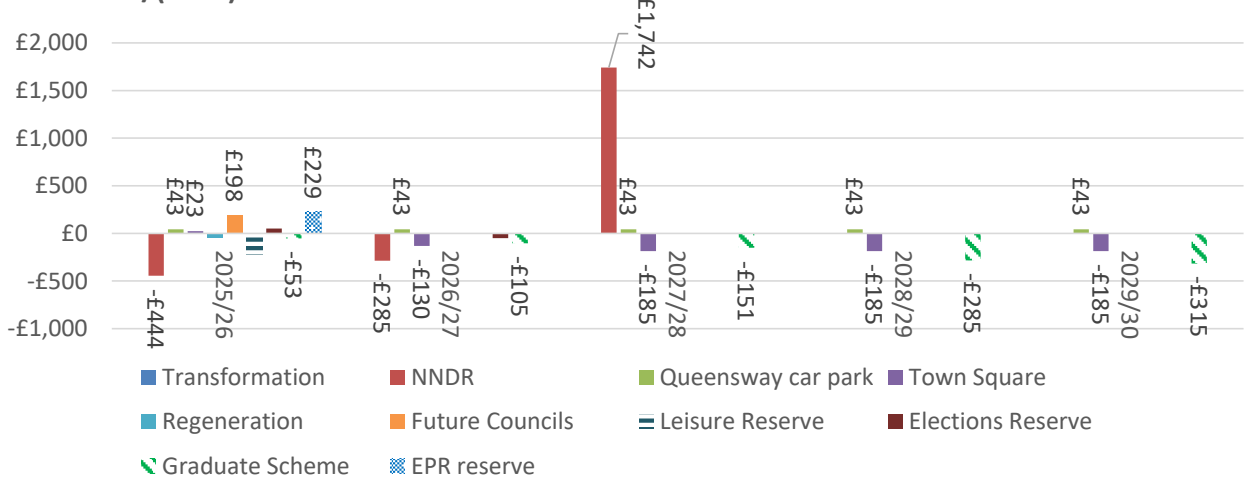


MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26-2029/30 Appendix A

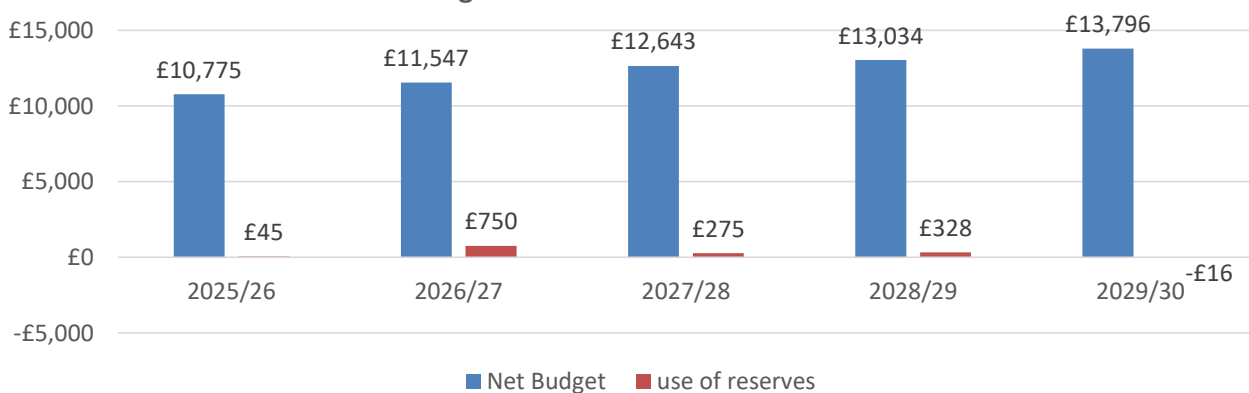


MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26-2029/30 Appendix A

Transfer to/(from) earmarked reserves £'000

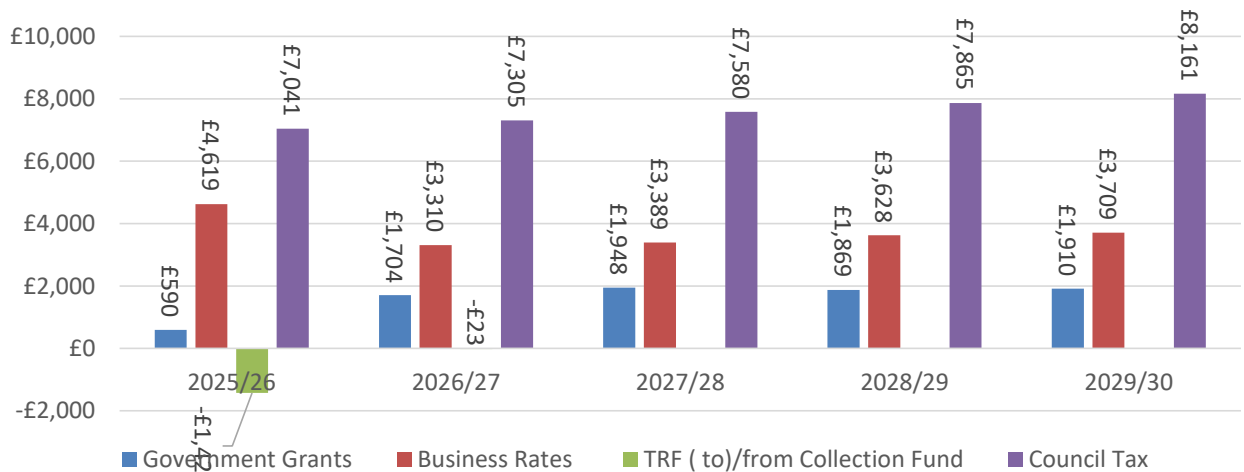


Net Budget and Use of Reserves £'000

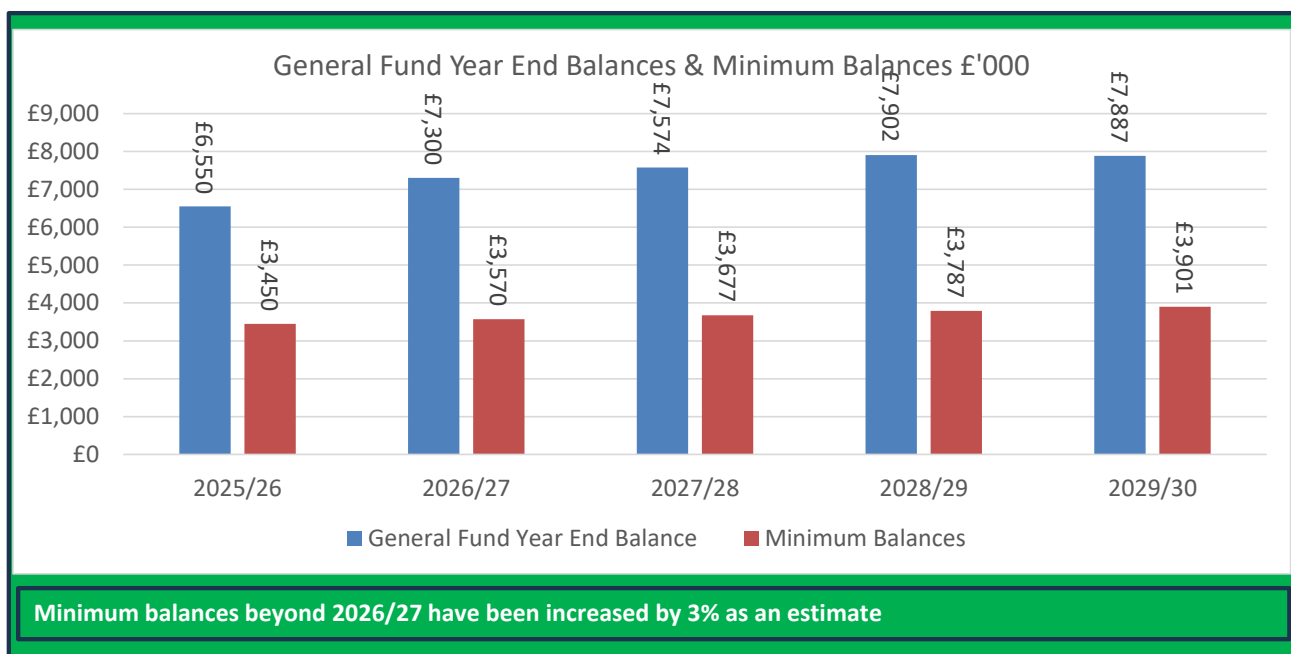


(-) = draw on balances

Core Resources £'000



MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26-2029/30 Appendix A





Meeting: CABINET

Agenda Item:

Portfolio Area: Resources and Performance



Date: 17 SEPTEMBER 2025

1ST QUARTER REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2025/26 – GENERAL FUND AND HRA

KEY DECISION

Author – Veronika Mendy/Keith Reynoldson/Rhona Bellis
Contributor – Atif Iqbal, Finance team and budget Managers
Lead Officers – Atif Iqbal
Contact Officer – Atif Iqbal

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on the projected General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital 2025/26 net expenditure and seek approval to amend the General Fund, HRA and Capital budgets as part of the quarterly revenue monitoring review.
- 1.2 To update Members on the reserves and balances available to support revenue expenditure and seek approval for revisions to the allocated reserves.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

General Fund

- 2.1 That the 2025/26 first quarter projected net decrease in General Fund expenditure of £548,850 be approved.
- 2.2 That Members note the proposed movement on reserves as detailed in paragraph 4.2.1

Housing Revenue Account

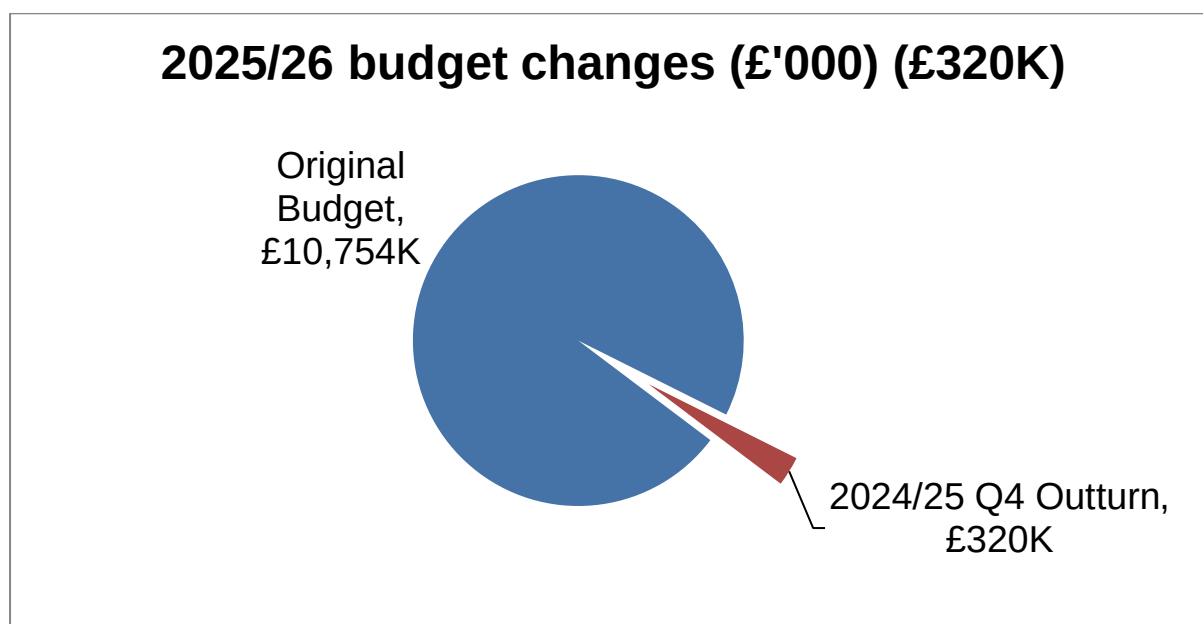
- 2.3 That the 2025/26 first quarter net decrease in HRA expenditure of £35,540 be approved.

Capital Programme

- 2.6. That the General Fund capital budget re-phasing of £9 Million from 2025/26 to future years be approved.
- 2.7. That the Housing Revenue Account capital budget re-phasing of £9 Million from 2025/26 to future years be approved.
- 2.8. That net changes to budgets fully grant funded of (£5K) in paragraph 4.9.2 be noted.
- 2.9. That General Fund and HRA virements in section 4.10 be approved.
- 2.10. That the proposed changes to the funding of the General Fund and HRA capital budgets in section 4.11 be approved.

3. BACKGROUND - GENERAL FUND

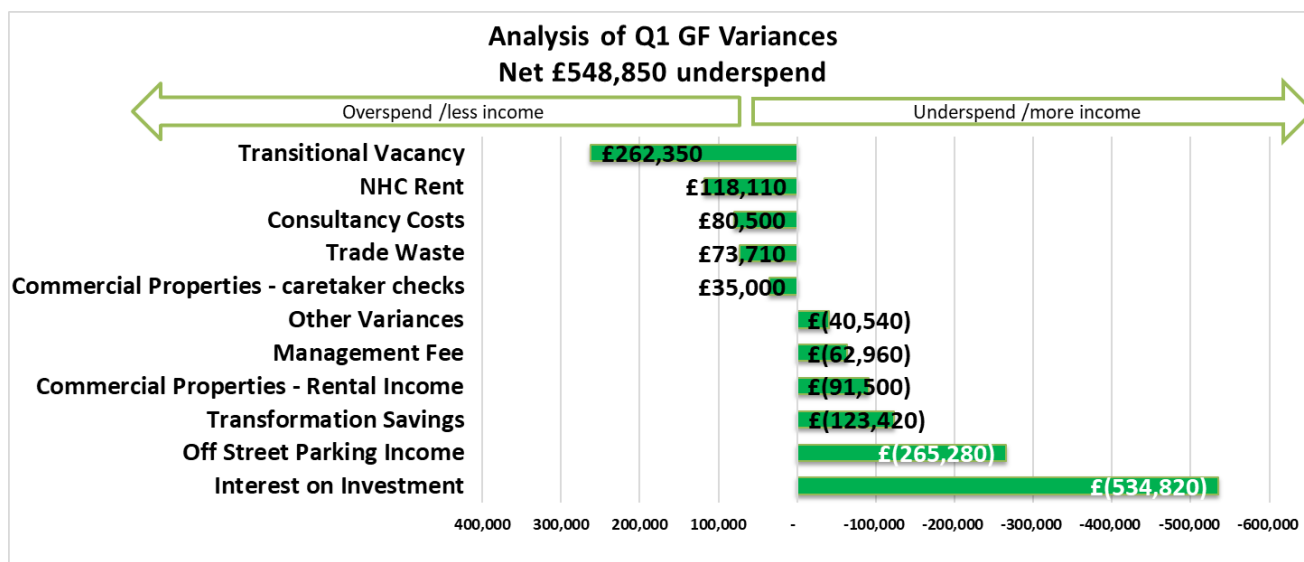
- 3.1. Since the General Fund net budget of £10,753,540 was approved at February 2025 Council, Members have approved net budget changes of £320,390 as detailed in the chart below:



4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 General Fund – Budget Review

- 4.1.1 Following the first quarter review of the General Fund budgets officers are projecting a decrease in the forecast budget for the year of £548,850.



4.1.2 The primary reasons for the underspend are detailed below, with a full analysis of less significant minor variances available in Appendix A:

- **Transitional Vacancy £262K Overspend** - 4.5% saving on staffing costs is assumed across most salary budgets, to take account of staff turnover and vacancy periods between leavers and starters. The table below provides a breakdown by service area where the transitional vacancy target is predicted not to be achievable. While this is being realised in Quarter one, it could be that underspends in other services may help to offset this pressure over the remainder of the financial year. The rationale for reporting the TV shortfall at this stage is due to the use of agency staff in some areas to cover vacancies to maintain operational services and a lower turnover of staff in services identified above.

Service	£
SDS Operatives - TV	108,800
SDS Back Office - TV	55,650
Garages - TV	7,980
Museum - TV	7,830
Planning - TV	60,000
Communities - TV	22,090
Total	262,350

- **Noth Hertfordshire College (NHC) Rent £118K Reduced Income** – Members approved the move of the indoor market to Park place and renting to North Herts College the current in door market location. The 2025/26 budgeted assumption was for rent to be payable for the year; however, the indoor market move is now anticipated to be November, with the ensuing works to be completed to St

Georges following that move. This is a timing issue, and the income will be due in 2026/27.

- **Procurement Support and Agency costs £81K Overspend** – this relates £42.5K of one-off expenditure to support the procurement of new Facility Management contracts. This work is part of the Council's Strategic Asset Management plan and covers both Hard FM services (maintenance and building works) and Soft FM services (cleaning and security). The remaining £38K relates to external support for the commercial properties' portfolio lettings. Based on expenditure trends in previous years, this budget is underfunded. The additional cost is more than offset by additional commercial rental income included in this report.
- **Trade Waste £74K Overspend** – The current overspend is attributable to the shortfall in income (£24K) and the underbudgeting of disposal costs (£49K)
 1. The trade waste service continues to expand its customer base, with year-to-date actuals, indicating income will be approximately £50K higher than in 2024/25. While this represents a positive trajectory, income remains £24,390 below the original budget. It is therefore proposed that the income budget be rebased in 2026/27, before applying further uplifts from the planned fees and charges review.
 2. In addition, the budget for trade waste disposal is not aligned with current income levels and requires adjustment. This results in an ongoing pressure of £49,320.
- **Caretaker Checks £35K Overspend** – The caretaking service is being used to checks carried out on void commercial properties, which means a charge to the General Fund of circa £35K. This will be included as part of the 2026/27 budget setting.
- **Other Variances (£41K) Underspend** – A breakdown of these minor variances can be found in Appendix A.
- **Management Fee (£63K) Underspend** – At Quarter four outturn of 2024/25, an adjustment was made to the Leisure Contract to reflect anticipated pressure from utility costs in 2025/26. However, the confirmed contract price for the year was lower than expected, resulting in a £63K underspend.
- **Commercial Properties – Rental Income (£92K) Additional Income** –The Estates team continue to work through rent reviews due, and the current trend is an uplift in rent income of £92K, some of this will have arisen due to a historic backlog of rent reviews. There were five rent reviews completed during the first quarter which resulted in an increase of 28.32% on the existing rents.
- **Business Change Savings (£123K) Underspend** – In September 2023, the Executive considered a report which provided an update on the Future Council 2025 Transformation Programme, including the approval to undertake a series of activity led service reviews of community facing and environmental operations under the Service Delivery and Localities theme. A review covering

the reorganisation of part of two business units (Stevenage Direct Services and Housing & Neighbourhoods), with the objective to realign resources with corporate priorities and deliver the financial saving to help balance the budget including community services and events. To date, the savings have been realised within the Housing & Neighbourhoods, delivering £123K contribution to the General Fund. Further savings are anticipated later in the year as work concludes within the Stevenage Direct Services business unit and the full year future years saving is included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to this Committee meeting.

- **Off Street Parking Income (£265K) Additional Income** – The Original 2025/26 income budget was reduced by £200K in recognition of the reduction in parking income post COVID. However, the 2024/25 outturn position (reported July 2025) exceeded the in-year budget, and a similar position is expected for 2025/26. The forecast also includes commercial income from Marshgate Car Park lease extension with Autolus of £97K, and compounding arrangements on Swingate car park.
- **Interest on Investment (£535K) Additional Income** – The increased projection in investment interest relates to:
 1. Additional interest from the Wholly Owned Company Marshgate (WOC) (£305K). The WOC budgeted estimate was £305K for six months, however the loan is now due to be repaid by 31 March 2026 increasing the interest due. The WOC is currently developing homes on the Cortland site.
 2. The level of cash reserves available is higher than estimated (£229K) based on current levels and projected patterns of spend for revenue and capital. The projected interest rate is now 4.5% versus an estimate of 4%.

Other Impacts on the 2025/26 budget

- i. The 2025/26 pay award negotiations between the unions and employers have now been agreed. An increase of 3.2% has been accepted by the unions slightly higher than the estimated 3% included in the budget. The pay award was paid to staff in the August payroll, the additional cost is estimated at circa £50K, but not yet included in the quarterly monitoring adjustments and will be accounted for in the 2nd Quarter Monitoring report to the November Cabinet.
- ii. The cumulative changes made to the General Fund net budget, remain within the £400,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Cabinet.

Executive Delegation - General Fund	£'000
Original Net General Fund Budget	10,754
Previously approved Budget Changes	320
Revised GF Budget agreed	11,074
Quarterly monitoring Q1	(549)
Updated GF Budget	10,525
Within Executive Delegated Limit	628

4.2 Review of General Fund Balances

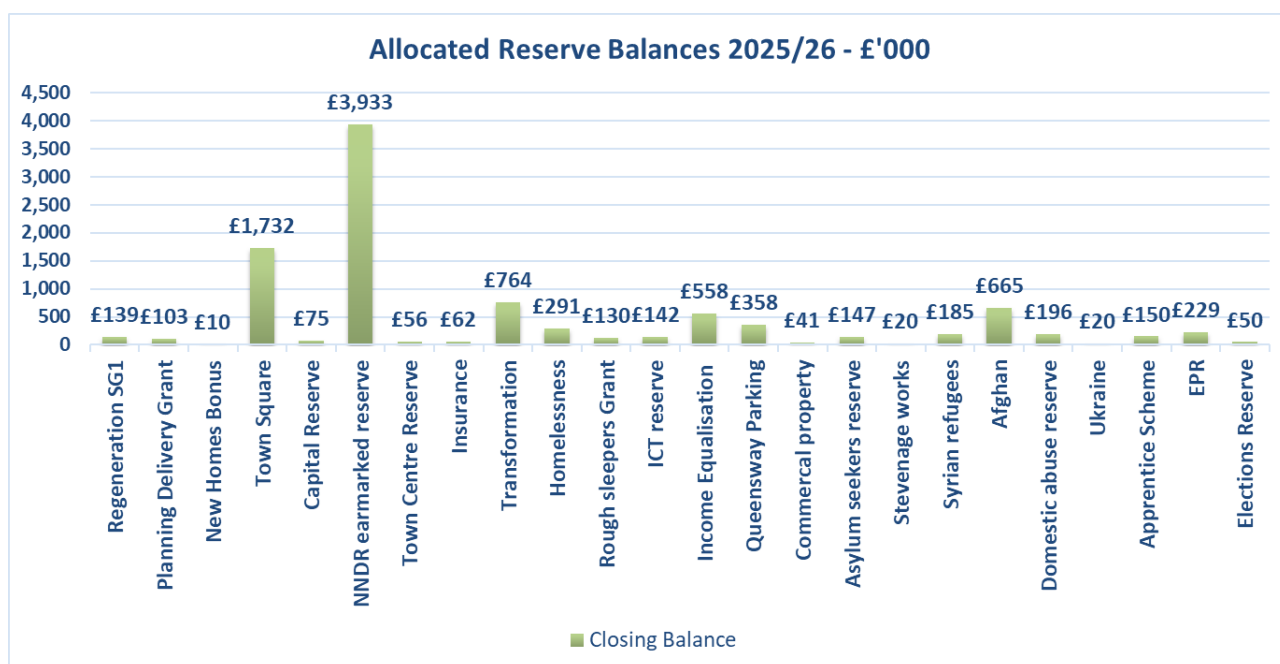
4.2.1 **Allocated Reserves** - these balances are 'ring fenced' and have been set aside for specific purposes. The estimated total value of (revenue) allocated reserves as at 31 March 2026 is **£10,053,508** (31 March 2025, £11,030,040). During quarter one, the following movement between reserves have been recommended.

Reserves	Q1 To Be Approved
Regeneration SG1	(49,860)
Future Councils reserve	(25,710)
EPR	(120,920)
NNDR earmarked reserve	(61,630)
Elections Reserve	10,000
Total	(248,120)

*() represents movement to reserves

- **Regeneration** – The forecast transfer to reserves for the year is based on the latest activity profile for 2025/26.
- **Future Councils Reserve** – to realign the expenditure with available funding. At the current rate of use, it is projected that the reserve will be fully spent by the end of the financial year.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Reserve** – In July 2025, the Council received confirmation of EPR funding to support the net additional costs of collecting household packaging waste. This was a further £120,920 in addition to the £1.078Million the Council was awarded. The extra funding is not guaranteed and has been transferred to the EPR reserve until a scheme is identified and the funding award clear as the additional funding will be subject to PackUK recovering sufficient contributions from producers.
- **NNDR** – The Swingate project has incurred lower borrowing costs than anticipated due to the profile of equity lent to the LLP. Members approved the holding cost of the loan would be met from the NNDR reserve so the resulting underspend will be returned to the earmarked reserve.

- **Elections Reserve** – the funds were used to support Bedwell By-Election held in July 2025.



4.2.2 General Fund Balance – Following the 1st quarter review the General Fund balance as at the 31 March 2026 is now forecast to be £6,800,161.

General Fund Balances	Working Budget £'000
Original Net General Fund Budget	10,754
Approved budget changes	320
Net Working budget approved to Date	11,074
1st Quarter Review	(549)
Total Net Expenditure post Q1 review	10,525
Less core resources at Budget Setting Report	(10,820)
Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances	(295)
General Fund balance 31/3/25	(6,506)
Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances	(295)
Projected General Fund balance 31/3/26	(6,800)
Allocated Revenue Reserves (Paragraph 4.2.1)	(10,054)
Total General Fund Revenue balances (estimated 31/3/26)	(16,854)

4.3 **Review of Savings** – As part of the 2025/26 budget setting, the Council agreed savings of £1.245Million. The table below represents the RAG rated delivery of those schemes.

Target	RAG		% of Target
1,245,450	Delivering	1,142,450	92%
	Partially Achieving	63,000	5%
	Not Achieving	40,000	3%
1,245,450		1,245,450	

- 4.3.1 Based on the first Quarter expenditure position, the Council is on track to deliver the majority of its planned savings. However, a small number of schemes are unlikely to meet their savings targets:

Postage Franking and Bank Charges – while the savings from postage and franking are expected to be fully achieved (£42,950), the saving target of £20,050 for bank charges is not currently on track. The reasons for this shortfall are being investigated, and the findings will be reported in the next quarter.

Indoor Market – the saving linked to the relocation of the indoor market to Park Place was estimated for a full year this is a timing issue and will be realised in 2026/27, (see also para. 4.1.2)

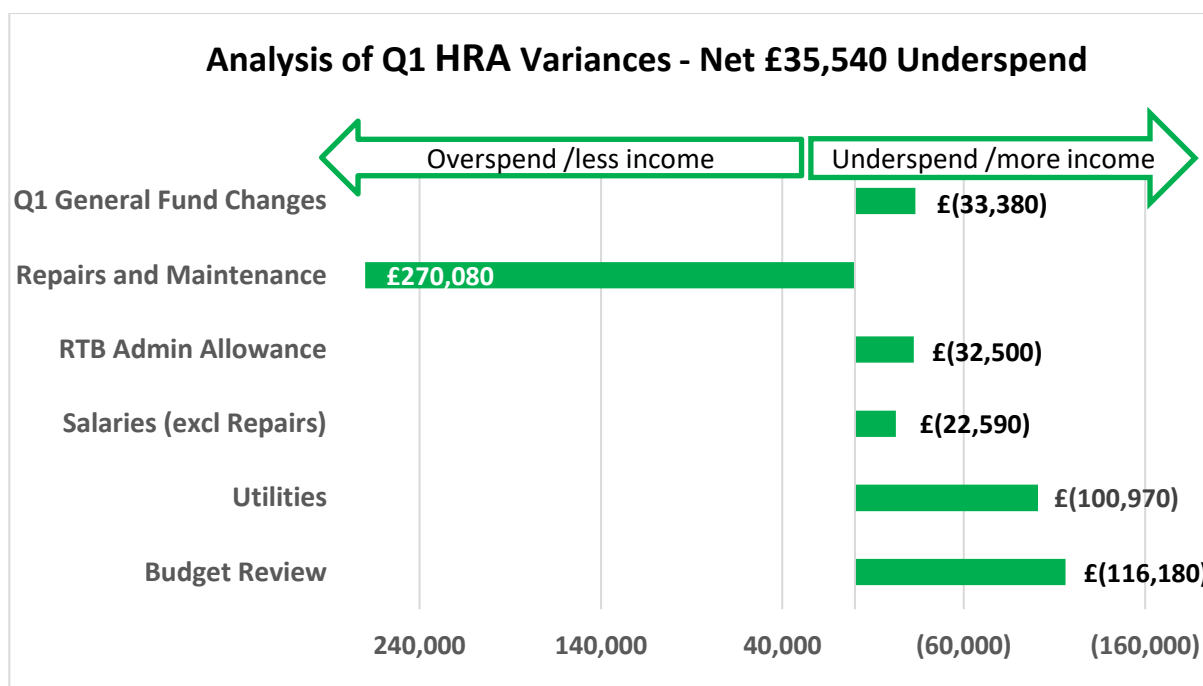
4.4 Housing Revenue Account

- 4.4.1 Since the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net budget deficit of £668K was approved at Council in January 2025, Members have further approved net changes of £120K shown in the following table.

HRA Working Budget	£'000
Original Budget 2025/26	668
24/25 Q4 Carry Forwards	120
Total Working Budget	788

4.5 Housing Revenue Account - Budget Review

- 4.5.1 Following the first quarter review of revenue budgets officers have identified and projected the following budget movements.



4.5.2 Q1 General Fund Changes (£33K) Underspend. Some of the General Fund proposed changes at Q1 impact budgets that are recharged to the HRA. The net impact of these changes at Q1 is a £33K underspend for the year.

4.5.3 Repairs and Maintenance £270K Overspend. The repairs and maintenance service has an overall £270K increase in expected costs for the year, with the details listed below.

- **Salary Savings (£314K) Underspend** – the latest salary projections show a saving of £314K against the budget. Approximately half of this (£175K) relates to additional budgets included for the provision of a direct service team to provide void repairs. The timing of commencing this service was not finalised when the budget was calculated and it is likely to be later than initially forecast, which has given the saving in this year. This also partly offsets the additional costs highlighted in the void pressure below. The remaining saving relates to vacant posts and the current estimated recruitment timetables.
- **Building safety pressures £335K Overspend** – several areas within the building safety and compliance area are currently showing budget pressures for the year. The largest pressure of £160K is on building safety and compliance, as requirements from new regulations are incorporated into the service. However, there are also increases in lift maintenance, door entry systems and legionella testing. Some of these are as a consequence of programme reviews and the timing of inspection regimes, but mitigating action is being taken to contain costs and many of these areas are being tendered to ensure good value from our specialist contractors. Any ongoing cost impact in this area will be built into the HRA Business Plan revision, but it is anticipated that this can be reduced in coming years.

- **Void pressures £249K Overspend** – there is an estimated pressure of £249K on void repairs for the year. The original budget was substantially reduced from last year's outturn of £3.4Million to £1.75Million on the basis that the work would be part of a tendering process and that there would be an in-house team introduced that would help the Council to reduce costs in this area. However, the timing of the in-house team and technical delays on the tendering process have led to slightly higher costs in the first part of the year. Looking forward it is expected that costs will come down, but this will continue to be monitored in future budget reports.

In summary, the current variance for the first quarter is comparatively low to the overall budget for repairs and maintenance and is still significantly lower than last year's cost. However, as several new contracts have been commenced and this is mainly a demand led service, there is still a high level of risk in this area that will continue to be closely monitored throughout the year.

- 4.5.4 **Right to Buy (RTB) Admin Allowance (£33K) Additional Income.** The RTB regulations allow the Council to deduct £1,300 per property sale from the proceeds to cover the administration process of the scheme. The changes to the discount in November last year from a maximum £102K to £34K prompted a large increase in applications for tenants to buy their homes. It has always been difficult to estimate how many applications will convert to a property sale, but in recent years Stevenage has seen roughly 50% of applications convert to sales. The expected number of property sales was increased in the budget from 35 to 50, recognising this potential spike. However, latest projections indicate sales for the year of between 75 to 100. Therefore, the admin allowance deducted for these sales has been increased by £33K to reflect 75 sales, but this will be reviewed again at Q2. This is expected to be a temporary change, as the lower discount is likely to reduce future sales under this scheme.
- 4.5.5 **Salaries (£23K) Underspend.** At Q1 there has been a very small saving on salaries of £23K, but the revised figures have also allowed for the release of £132K of vacancy allowance included in the budget. The majority of the underspend relates to vacant posts, and the new projection is based on the latest likely recruitment dates for these positions. This projection takes into account the totality of the pay award. This figure excludes the budgets for repairs and maintenance that are detailed in 4.5.3 above.
- 4.5.6 **Utilities (£101K) Underspend.** Latest estimates for utility payments on gas and electricity show a £101K reduction from the original budget of £1.3Million. However, this will need to be reviewed again later in the year, when contract prices are reviewed and to reflect actual usage.
- 4.5.7 **Budget Reviews (£116K) Net Underspend.** As part of budget preparations for 2026/27 senior offices have conducted a review of the current budget. The aim was to begin identifying savings to meet the targets necessary to balance the HRA in the medium term. Some of the items identified for next year also had implications for the current year and these are detailed below.

- **Compensation Payments £30K Overspend** – in recent years these payments have increased and have been funded from other budget underspends. There is also now an increased expectation from regulators that compensation will be paid, where complaints are upheld. For this reason, it is now recognised that in a complex business with an annual turnover of £50Million, it is reasonable to allow for this cost to be permanently budgeted.
- **Decants £10K Overspend** - decant costs can occur for a variety of reasons, but with increased regulatory demands on repairs issues it is likely that this area will come under pressure and the budget has been increased to recognise this changed operating environment.
- **Tenant Engagement £20K Overspend** – following the introduction of regulation by the Regulator of Social Housing, particularly on customer standards, an increased budget is now required to fund tenant engagement and demonstrate a continued commitment to service improvement and consultation with customers.
- **Professional Training £10K Overspend** – as part of recent regulatory changes there is now a specific requirement for social housing providers to ensure that they have properly qualified staff in key positions within the organisation. In recognition of this new requirement, an additional budget has been set aside to ensure that the Council can meet this obligation.
- **Water Rates Agency (£50K) Additional Income** – the Council currently collect the water rates for the majority of tenants on behalf of the water company, less deductions for administering the service. The bills charged to our tenants are identical to if the water company billed them directly, but the Council retain £349K to represent both admin costs and the risks of non-payment. This money is ring fenced to our tenants and is re-invested in the housing service only. As water bills increased substantially, after the original budget was set, the deductions the Council can retain have also increased and a further £50K of income is now anticipated in this year.
- **Climate Change Levy (£108K) Underspend** – the original budget for the climate change levy was initially overstated. This has been corrected, giving a reduction in costs of £108K for the year.
- **Insurance Premium Recharge (£168K) Additional Income** – as part of the final budget review for 2025/26 the latest insurance premium figures were incorporated in the budget, including those recharged to tenants and leaseholders. However, for 25/26 there was a significant increase and while this was included in expenditure, the recharge budget was not increased. This correction has reduced the overall budget by £168K.
- **Stationery Costs (£10K) Underspend** – due to new working arrangements and a natural shift away from paper-based records since the pandemic, the old stationery budgets have been reduced to help offset other spend priorities detailed above.
- **Financial Support £150K Overspend** – due to the current financial pressures facing the HRA, there are many areas that require detailed financial analysis and support. These include completing the HRA Business Plan re-write, accounting for the restructuring of some

services, understanding the financial impact of regulation and policy changes and improving financial reporting for the operational housing managers. In order to achieve these goals an additional £150K has been proposed in the budget for 2025/26. This covers temporary project-based support in the current year and the addition of a permanent finance assistant post in the HRA finance team that mirrors the structure currently in place for the General Fund accounting teams. This will also be reviewed part of 2026/27 budget setting process.

4.6 Housing Revenue Account Balances

4.6.1 Following the first quarter review, the HRA balance is now forecast to be £10.2Million and is above minimum required balances.

Housing Revenue Account Outturn Position	£'000
Working Budget – Council 22nd January 2025	788
1st Quarter Net Projected Overspend	(36)
Projected net Surplus post 3rd Quarter review	752
HRA balance brought forward 1/4/25	(10,926)
Deficit in year	752
Projected HRA balance 31/3/2026	(10,173)
Remaining Cabinet Delegated Limit	536

4.7 Capital Monitoring

4.7.1. The latest revised 2025/26 capital strategy (Q4) was approved by Cabinet on 9 July 2025. The 2025/26 approved budget for each fund was:

- General Fund £61 million
- Housing Revenue Account £52 million

4.7.2. The table sets out the current projected position for the Capital programme 2025/26 and any proposed rephasing of budgets at Q1 into future years.

	2025/26				2026/27		2027/28	
£000	Actual & committed Spend Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Revised Strategy	Variance Q4 v Q1	Re-phased	Revised Strategy	Re-phased	Revised Strategy
Total GF Schemes	15,481	60,626	49,538	(11,088)	8,993	17,432	-	-
Total HRA Schemes	9,292	51,987	42,947	(9,040)	9,040	66,289	-	41,030
Total Capital Programme	24,773	112,613	92,485	(20,128)	18,033	83,721	-	41,030
<i>Re-phase detail:</i>								
Housing Development				(8,993)	8,993		-	

	2025/26				2026/27		2027/28	
£000	Actual & committed Spend Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Revised Strategy	Variance Q4 v Q1	Re-phased	Revised Strategy	Re-phased	Revised Strategy
Regeneration				(2,100)	-			
Leisure				5	-			
Total GF Re-phasing				(11,088)	8,993		-	
New Build (Housing Development)				(9,040)	9,040		-	
Total HRA Re-phasing				(9,040)	(9,040)		-	

Re-phasing

4.8. Re-phasing (re-profiling) of budgets are changes regarding the forecast timing of expenditure from the approved programme, between financial years, with no reported increase or decrease in budget requirement.

4.8.1. Forecasting spend during the year involves making assumptions about future events that may be out of the control of service managers e.g. weather, thus re-phasing is a normal part of capital monitoring.

4.8.2. General Fund – re-phasing £9 million - the main items are explained below:

- Housing Development –
 - The Oval – following a successful £20.4Million (GF and HRA) Homes England grant application, a contractor has now been appointed with works expected to start in October 2025 - £5Million of the initial works budget (GF) has been re-phased into 2026/27 to align with the expected delivery profile. Delays to the project's initial phasing were caused mainly by waiting for the grant application outcome. Grant funding will be claimed monthly in arrears from Homes England up to a maximum of £9.2Million.
 - Kenilworth – Malvern Close - £4Million re-phased into 2026/27 as progress on site has been limited whilst the Department for Transport process a Stopping Up Order to enable works to take place.

4.8.3. HRA – re-phasing £9million - the main items are explained below:

- Housing Development (HRA) –
 - Burwell phase 2 - £750k rephased to 2026/27 as a delayed start on site as a result of pre-commencement conditions discharged by Herts County Council has had an impact on the wide programme.
 - The Oval (HRA) – see also comments in 4.8.2 above, £7.3Million HRA budget has been re-phased to 2026/27 to align with delivery expectations. Homes England Grant funding of £8.4Million will be receivable in April 2026. The balance of awarded grant funding (£2.8Million) will be paid on completion of the project.

- Ellis Avenue – a delay on site has occurred whilst the statutory provider carries out work to relocate a high voltage cable and £1Million has been rephased into 2026/27.

4.9. Virements and Grant funded growth to note.

4.9.1. Members are asked to note the following:

4.9.2. Increase in the budget of £5K due to grant funding received from the Lawn Tennis Association for capital works for Leisure KC052 (Shephalbury Park).

4.10. Budget Removed

4.10.1. The £2.1Million budget for the refurbishment of the Indoor Market to be funded from borrowing is now to be funded from grant funding (TF) using an existing budget, so the budget for borrowing has been removed.

4.11. Capital Financing

4.11.1. The table below sets out the change in the Capital Financing position since Q4, because of changes to the expenditure phasing discussed above.

4.11.2. LEP grant funding of £492,182.78 was received by the council in June 2025 and related to a project completed in 2024/25 (Gunnels Wood). As the funding was in arrears the project was funded using unallocated capital receipts at the end of 2024/25. These capital receipts have now been reinstated.

£000	2024/25			2025/26		2026/27	
	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Revised Strategy	Variance Q4 v Q1	Re-phased	Revised Strategy	Re-phased	Revised Strategy
Total Capital Financing	112,613	92,485	(20,128)	18,033	83,721	-	41,030
Changes detail:							
Capital Receipts			(185)	(424)		-	
Grants and Contributions			(5,005)	5,000		-	
Short Term Borrowing			(5,928)	4,417		-	
Revenue contributions			30	-			
Total GF Financing changes			(11,088)	8,993		-	
Capital Receipts			(9,040)	9,040		-	
Total HRA Financing changes			(9,040)	9,040		-	
Total Capital Financing			(20,128)	18,033		-	

4.12. Capital Receipts Forecast

4.12.1. The table below summaries the current capital receipts forecasts for the General Fund. These include capital receipts already ringfenced for future capital works or for the repayment of short-term internal borrowing.

Table 5: Capital Receipts	Previous Forecast	Revised Forecast/Actual	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Capital Receipts			
Year 2025/26 Forecast	3,730	2,434	(1,296)
Year 2026/27 Forecast	12,926	9,243	(3,683)
Year 2027/28 Forecast	0	19,276	19,276
Grant Total Capital Receipts	16,656	30,953	(4,979)

4.12.2. Until sold, the value of land sales can fluctuate from the forecast as can be seen. The overall increase in the forecast is mainly due to the inclusion of capital receipts from the Swingate JV in 2027/28. Six million general capital receipts have now been slipped from 2026/27 into 2027/28.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 This report is financial in nature and consequently financial implications are included above. The impact of these changes for future years will be incorporated into the budget setting process.

5.1.2 While the current variance on maintenance costs within the HRA are relatively small (see paragraph 4.5.3), this continues to be an area of high financial risk. The commencement of new contracts and the demand led nature of large parts of the service could lead to a much larger variance over the remaining three quarters of the year. The current forecast has been made on the expected contract prices and assumed volumes of work, but this will continue to be monitored closely in future reports.

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 The objective of this report is to outline the projected General Fund net expenditure, HRA and Capital Strategy for 2025/26 and the impact on the General Fund and HRA balances. While there are no legal consequences at this stage Members are reminded of their duty to set a balanced budget.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.3.1 This report summarises external and internal factors that impact on approved budgets and recommends changes to those budgets in year. Budget changes identified for future years that could adversely impact on groups covered by statutory equality duties will be incorporated into the budget setting process

which includes Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA). None of the budget changes reported will change any existing equalities and diversity policies.

5.4 Risk Implications

- 5.4.1 A risk-based assessment of balances is undertaken and reported to Council as part of the General Fund Budget setting process. Both the General Fund and HRA balances are projected to be above minimum levels.

5.5 Policy Implications

- 5.5.1 The budget framework represents a development of a policy led budgeting approach across Council services and the overall Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5.6 Climate Change Implications

- 5.6.1 The Budget and Policy setting process prioritised growth for climate change. The process should have due regard for climate change implications based on the Council's Climate Change Strategy. There are no direct climate change implications from the budget changes in this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

BD1 – Final Housing Revenue Account Budget Setting and Rent Report 2025/26 (Council 22 January 2025)

BD2 – General Fund and Council Tax Setting 2025/26 and Final Capital Strategy 2024/25-2028/29 (Council 26 February 2025)

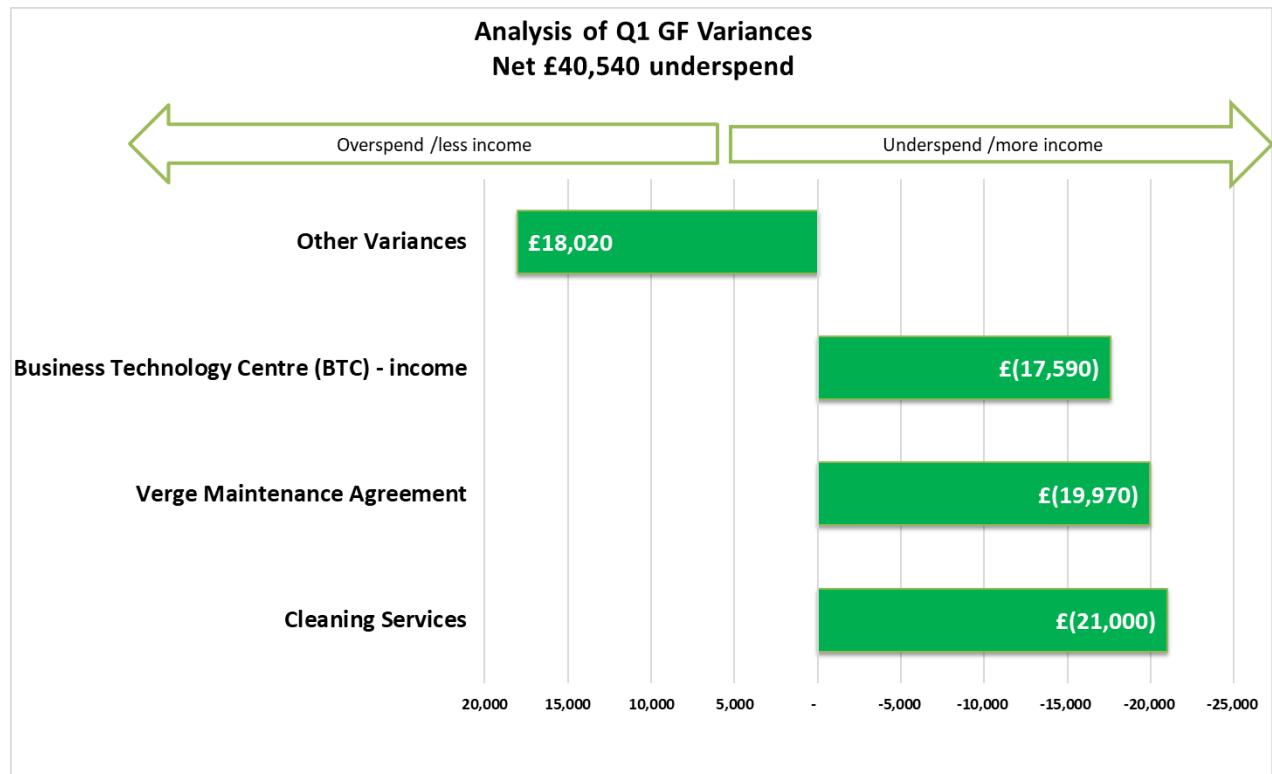
BD3 – 4th Quarter Monitoring Report General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Capital, and Group Companies 2024/25 (Cabinet 9 July 2025)

Appendices

- A GF Revenue Monitor (Minor Variances)
- B HRA Capital Strategy (2025/26)
- C General Fund Capital Strategy (2025/26)

Appendix A

Following the first quarter review of the General Fund budgets, officers have identified a projected decrease in the forecast budget for the year of £548,850. The detailed analysis of the primary reasons can be found in the main report, and the analysis of other minor variances totalling £40,540 are detailed below:



- **Business Technology Centre (BTC) Additional Income (£17.6K)** – the 2025/26 BTC income budget is £1,156K for the year and an additional £17.6K is projected for the year. This is lower than the contracted sum but still represents total income of £1.2M for the Council. The contract is due for renewal in 2026/27.
- **Verge Maintenance Agreement (£20K) Underspend** – the forecasted position is based on 2024/25 actuals and currently reflects a small underspend. This position will remain until the updated contract for the current financial year with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is finalised. The draft contract provided by HCC includes an uplift linked to September 2024 CPI of 1.7%, which, if agreed, will generate additional income.
- **Cleaning Services (£21K) Underspend** – The cleaning contract has not been reviewed for a number of years and will be tendered in the near future, a review of cleaning hours prior to tender has resulted in a saving.

- **Other variances £18K Overspend**– a combination of small variances across the service.

HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY



		2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actuals and committed costs Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q1 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Capital Programme	SUMMARY							
	Capital Programme Excl New Build (Housing Investment)	1,647,609	22,665,090	22,665,090		19,993,134	21,519,212	21,543,326
	Special Projects & Equipment	5,393						
	New Build (Housing Development)	7,611,277	29,006,289	19,966,097	(9,040,192)	46,097,192	18,770,580	8,400,000
	Digital & Transformation	27,953	316,037	316,037		199,000	740,000	764,000
	TOTAL HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME	9,292,232	51,987,416	42,947,224	(9,040,192)	66,289,326	41,029,792	30,707,326
	(9,292,232.12)							
	HRA USE OF RESOURCES							
	BH930 MRR (Self Financing Depreciation)		13,126,041	13,126,041		13,532,319	13,938,288	14,356,438
	BH902 Other Capital Receipts		-	-		-	-	-
	BH906 Section 20 Contribution (leaseholders income)		2,957,878	2,957,878		3,261,738	1,173,177	805,409
	BH901 (RTB) new Build provision		11,186,734	2,146,542	(9,040,192)	12,894,613	3,982,876	4,114,542
	BH903 RTB - Debt Provision Receipts		1,464,120	1,464,120		1,050,506	1,076,769	1,103,688
	Borrowing Prudential		14,335,365	14,335,365		30,959,784	12,280,024	9,327,249
	Borrowing Short term							
	S106							
	BH906 Developer Contributions (Kenilworth)							
	Direct Revenue Financing (was RCCO)		1,356,523	1,356,523		3,390,366	4,438,658	-
	BH905 Grant		7,560,755	7,560,755		1,200,000	4,140,000	1,000,000
	TOTAL HRA RESOURCES FOR CAPITAL		51,987,416	42,947,224	(9,040,192)	66,289,326	41,029,792	30,707,326
			0					
	Major Repair Reserve Bought Forward (BH930)					(12,133)	(12,133)	(12,134)
	Depreciation (increasing MRR)		(13,138,174)	(13,138,174)		(13,532,319)	(13,938,289)	(14,356,438)
	MRR Used (decreasing MRR)		13,126,041	13,126,041		13,532,319	13,938,288	14,356,438
	Major Repair Reserve Carried Forward		(12,133)	(12,133)	(0)	(12,133)	(12,134)	(12,134)
	BH901 Total RTB Receipts Bought Forward		(6,428,767)	(6,974,610)	(545,843)	(9,221,923)	(181,731)	(181,730)
	Total RTB Receipts Received		(5,857,975)	(5,857,975)		(3,854,421)	(3,982,876)	(4,114,542)
	Total RTB Receipts Used HRA		11,186,734	3,610,662	(7,576,072)	12,894,613	3,982,876	4,114,542
	Total RTB Receipts Carried Forward		(1,100,008)	(9,221,923)	(8,121,915)	(181,731)	(181,730)	(181,730)

HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY



		2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actuals and committed costs Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q1 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Various	CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXCL. NEW BUILD							
	Planned Investment including Decent Homes							
	Decent Homes - Internal/External Works	415,729	8,430,690	8,430,690		10,685,510	11,826,610	12,814,090
	KH308 Decent Homes Internal/External Works Contractor 1	457,674						
	KH310 Decent Homes Internal/External Works Voids	(41,945)	465,500	465,500		519,810	524,330	568,110
	KH143 Decent Homes Internal/One off Heating Works		3,620,540	3,620,540		4,042,980	4,078,140	4,418,650
	KH141 Decent Homes Electrical		155,170	155,170		173,270	582,590	631,240
	KH142 Decent Homes Kitchens and Bathrooms		1,965,440	1,965,440		3,465,410	3,495,550	3,787,420
	Various Decent Homes External Works							
	KH285 Window and Door Replacement		2,068,880	2,068,880		2,310,270	2,912,960	3,156,180
	KH298 Roofing		103,440	103,440		115,510	174,780	189,370
	KH299 Insulation Measures		51,720	51,720		58,260	58,260	63,120
	Various Decent Homes - Roofing							
	Decent Homes - Flat Blocks	538,213	6,806,700	6,806,700		288,780	291,300	315,620
	KH311 MRC Flat Blocks - Wates	(233,599)	779,573	779,573				
	KH312 MRC Flat Blocks - Mulalley	135,707	5,920,237	5,920,237				
	KH300 MRC Miscellaneous BUILDINGS	5,614						
	KH313 MRC Flat Blocks - Misc	630,492	106,890	106,890		288,780	291,300	315,620
	KH205 Communal Heating		59,440	59,440		115,510	116,520	126,250
	KH321 High Rises - Improvement Works	167,828	3,310,270	3,310,270				
	KH332 New Schemes to be created					2,021,490	2,039,070	2,209,330
	Health & Safety							
	KH085 Fire Safety	(55,432)						
	KH112 Asbestos Management	49,630	250,000	250,000		346,540	349,550	378,740
	KH114 Subsidence	31,960	124,130	124,130		138,620	139,820	151,500
	KH144 Contingent Major Repairs	69,041	577,550	577,550		577,570	582,590	631,240
	KH122 StockCondSurvey							
	KH157 Dhredec							
	KH327 Building safety		870,000	870,000		1,155,140	1,165,180	599,670
	Estate & Communal Area							
	KH223 Asset Review - Challenging Assets	57,500	464,400	464,400		479,261	494,597	510,424

HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY



		2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actuals and committed costs Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q1 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
KH224	Asset Review Non Red Shelter							
Various	Other HRA Schemes	373,140						
KH318	Stock condition Surveys	63,633	159,310	159,310		144,390	145,650	157,810
KH174	Energy Efficiency Pilot Projects							
KH319	Decarbonisation	15,003	825,000	825,000		2,640,000	3,300,000	2,500,000
KH094	Disabled Adaptations	294,504	787,600	787,600		585,763	604,508	623,852
KH330	CCTV					440,060	463,817	524,800
KH016	New Business Plan expenditure					374,500		
	TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXCL. NEW BUILD	1,647,609	22,665,090	22,665,090		19,993,134	21,519,212	21,543,326
	SPECIAL PROJECTS & EQUIPMENT							
	HRA Equipment							
KH015	Capital Equipment (including Supported Housing Equip)	5,393						
	Sub Total Special Projects & Equipment	5,393						

HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY



		2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actuals and committed costs Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q1 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
KH233 KH241 KH244 KH245 KH247 KH303 KH279 KH280 KH282 KH333	CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BUILD							
	New Build Programme - eligible for 1-4-1	652,359	21,809,730	12,769,538	(9,040,192)	23,652,192	12,783,580	8,400,000
	New Build Programme - ineligible	6,958,918	7,196,559	7,196,559		22,445,000	5,987,000	
	Open Market Acquisitions (Social Rent)	175,980					891,790	
	Open Market Acquisitions (Afford. Rent)						891,790	
	Open Market Acquisitions (Ineligible 141)							
	Ditchmore Lane 6 units (Ineligible 141)							
	Twin Foxes	390						
	March Hare in Burwell Road (15 Units)	244,425	2,482,959	1,732,959	(750,000)	750,000	(1,800,000)	
	Kenilworth Close (105 units) (Ineligible 141)	(93,975)	171,497	171,497				
	Kenilworth Close 1 for 1 Expenditure (61.8%)							
	Dunn Close (27 units, 21 main block SA)	9,718	456,177	456,177				
	29 Shephell Way	8,834						
	Symonds Green	(62,840)						
	North Road	300	120	120				
	Brent Court Social Rent	7,052,893	7,052,893	7,052,893		22,445,000	5,987,000	
KH307 KH304 KH301 KH314 KH334 KH335 KH072	Schemes Under Development	275,552	18,842,643	10,552,451	(8,290,192)	22,902,192	12,800,000	8,400,000
	The Oval (70 Units)	215,666	15,290,192	8,000,000	(7,290,192)	14,902,192		
	Shephall Social	40,030	32,615	32,615				
	Redcar Drive aka Cartref (Social Rent)	21,319						
	Redcar Drive aka Cartref (Affordable Rent)		1,732,329	1,732,329				
	Ellis Avenue (Social Rent)	(1,463)	953,899	453,899	(500,000)	500,000		
	Ellis Avenue (Affordable Rent)		861,439	361,439	(500,000)	500,000		
	Neighbourhood Centre Social Rent					3,500,000	5,500,000	
	Neighbourhood Centre Afford. Rent					3,500,000	5,500,000	
	Burwell Bond Affordable Housing						1,800,000	
	L.S.S.O. Buy Back		(27,831)	(27,831)				
	TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BUILD	7,611,277	29,006,289	19,966,097	(9,040,192)	46,097,192	18,770,580	8,400,000
KH268 KH315	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY							
	IT General (IT)							
	Infrastructure Investment		147,564	147,564		199,000	740,000	764,000
	Core ICT Equipment Equipmt & Tools							

HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY



		2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/2028	2028/2029
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actuals and committed costs Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q1 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy	Q1 Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
KH297	Core ICT Equipment Equipmt & Tools	3,913						
KH336	Core ICT Equipment Equipmt & Tools		20,000	20,000				
	Total General IT	3,913	167,564	167,564		199,000	740,000	764,000
	<u>Connected To Our Customers (CTOC)</u>							
KH288	New CRM Technology (Digital Platform)	23,940	29,803	29,803				
	Total CTOC	23,940	29,803	29,803				
	<u>Housing All Under One Roof programme (HAUOR)</u>							
KH283	Housing Improvements - Northgate online	100	118,670	118,670				
	Total HAUOR	100	118,670	118,670				
	TOTAL ICT INCLUDING DIGITAL AGENDA	27,953	316,037	316,037		199,000	740,000	764,000

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GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY



		2025/26				2026/27		
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actual and Committed Costs	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	General Fund - Schemes							
	Stevenage Direct Services	2,833,152	4,455,560	4,455,560	1	4,166,000	4,166,000	0
	Housing Development	7,445	17,204,071	8,211,538	(8,992,533)	2,874,748	11,867,281	8,992,533
	Finance and Estates	311,833	2,662,222	2,662,222	0	0	0	0
	Digital & Transformation	20,303	312,996	312,996	0	0	0	0
	Regeneration	11,360,578	33,767,983	31,667,983	(2,100,000)	1,300,781	1,300,781	0
	Communities and Neighbourhoods	797,996	1,206,496	1,211,496	5,000	0	0	0
	Planning and Regulatory	149,342	819,842	819,842	0	97,500	97,500	0
	Deferred Works Reserve	0	196,732	196,732	0	0	0	0
	Total Schemes	15,480,649	60,625,902	49,538,370	(11,087,532)	8,439,029	17,431,562	8,992,533
	General Fund -Resources							
	BG902 Capital Receipts	(15,480,649)	8,408,138	8,231,683	(176,455)	2,674,498	2,250,000	(424,498)
	SG1 Receipts		829,000	823,000	(6,000)			0
	Locality Review receipts				0	0	0	0
	BG905 Ringfenced receipts		1,435,916	1,433,616	(2,301)	0	0	0
	BG904 Towns Fund		21,851,776	21,842,167	(9,608)	1,300,781	1,300,781	0
	BG904 Other Grants and other contributions		9,744,345	4,749,345	(4,995,000)	42,000	5,042,000	5,000,000
	BG904 Contractors Deposits		54,644	54,644	0	0	0	0
	BG937 Local – Neighbourhood CIL		109,375	109,375	0	97,500	97,500	0
	BG903 Capital Reserve (Housing Receipts)		533,180	533,180	0	0	0	0
	- RCCO		159,394	84,113	(75,281)	118,000	118,000	0
	VAR Revenue Reserves		249,595	249,595	0	0	0	0
	BG916 Capital Reserve (Revenue Savings)			75,281	75,281	0	0	0
	- Prudential Borrowing Approved		2,712,000	612,000	(2,100,000)	4,206,250	4,206,250	0
	- Short Term borrowing and funded from private sale		14,538,540	10,740,372	(3,798,168)	0	4,417,031	4,417,031
	- Funding Gap		0	0		0	0	0
	Total Resources (General Fund)		60,625,902	49,538,371	(11,087,532)	8,439,029	17,431,562	8,992,533

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY



		2025/26				2026/27		
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actual and Committed Costs	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Stevenage Direct Services		0					
	Parks & Open Spaces							
KC218	Hertford Road Play Area (S106 Funded)	0	25,000	25,000	0	0	0	0
KE494	Green Space Access Infrastructure	1,799	52,024	52,024	0	0	0	0
KE542	Flat block waste management infrastructure	3,000	18,730	18,730	0	0	0	0
KE911	Play Area Improvement Programme	13,416	96,602	96,602	0	0	0	0
KE916	Peartree skate park	6,370	90,000	90,000	0	0	0	0
KE543	Shrub bed programme	0	46,779	46,779	0	0	0	0
KG002	Garages (GIP)	103,268	29,870	29,870	0	0	0	0
KG039	Garages (GIP) 10 year plan (£250k/annum)	0	250,000	250,000	0	250,000	250,000	0
KG040	Garages asbestos roof capital works	0	584,000	584,000	0	3,916,000	3,916,000	0
	Vehicles, Plant, Equipment		0					
KE497	Trade Waste Containers	0	0		0	0	0	0
Various	Vehicle/Plant replacement Programme - see Appendix 'A1 Vehicles'	2,704,243	3,029,799	3,029,799	0	0	0	0
KE925	Repair closed church wall St Nicholas church	600	25,757	25,757	0	0	0	0
KE926	roof residual waste bay Cavendish Transfer Station	456	150,000	150,000	0	0	0	0
KE609	Fuel pumps at Cavendish Road fuel station.	0	30,000	30,000	0	0	0	0
KE610	Replacement work Cavendish Road fuel station - manhole covers	0	17,000	17,000	0	0	0	0
KE930	Digital system streets and grounds services	0	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	0
	Total Stevenage Direct Services	2,833,152	4,455,560	4,455,560	1	4,166,000	4,166,000	0
	Housing Development Scheme (Joint GF/HRA)							
KG035	Kenilworth - Community Centre	0	1,211,538	1,211,538	0	0	0	0
KG032	Building Conversion New Homes	186						
KG034	Kenilworth - Retail	30		0	0			
KG042	The Oval (Redevelopment)	0	9,000,000	4,000,000	(5,000,000)	0	5,000,000	5,000,000
KG036	Kenilworth - private sale (Malvern Close & Blocks A3&A6)	7,229	6,992,533	3,000,000	(3,992,533)	424,498	4,417,031	3,992,533
Various	Housing Development Schemes (Joint GF/HRA)	7,445	17,204,071	8,211,538	(8,992,533)	424,498	9,417,031	8,992,533
KG038	Marshgate Wholly Owned Housing Development Company (WOC)	0	0	0	0	2,450,250	2,450,250	0
	Total Housing Development (including grants to Registered Providers)	7,445	17,204,071	8,211,538	(8,992,533)	2,874,748	11,867,281	8,992,533

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

		2025/26				2026/27		
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actual and Committed Costs	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Finance & Estates							
	Estates							
KE526	Cavendish Fire Protection : Urgent and H&S Works (delete)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE527	Depots: Planned Preventative Works (reroof) - constuct roof over refuse	20,749	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	0
KE529	Community Centres Urgent and H&S Works	0	3,970	3,970	0	0	0	0
KE536	Multi Storey Car Park - Installation of emergency lighting	197,160	205,299	205,299	0	0	0	0
KE554	Bedwell Neighbourhood centre canopy repairs	1,566	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE555	8-10 The glebe roof replacement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE558	MSCP resurface worn stairwell floor	0	78,141	78,141	0	0	0	0
KE927	Thermal Image Cameras	2,109	23,011	23,011	0	0	0	0
KE928	Install misting system Cavendish	0	345,000	345,000	0	0	0	0
KE559	MSCP / Indoor Market guttering	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR150	Works to improve vacant premises prior to re-letting	16,364	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR151	Daneshill: Urgent and H&S Works	9,803	48,951	48,951	0	0	0	0
KR152	BTC 2019/20 Backlog H&S Works	0	27,930	27,930	0	0	0	0
KR153	BTC Urgent and H&S Works	0	65,780	65,780	0	0	0	0
KR154	BTC Planned Preventative Works	20,045	175,855	175,855	0	0	0	0
KR155	EPC Surveys	7,167	77,759	77,759	0	0	0	0
KR156	EPC remedials	0	209,710	209,710	0	0	0	0
KR165	Cavendish Road reception access enhancement	610	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR167	Cavendish Road penstock valve - stops runoff going to sewage	0	49,886	49,886	0	0	0	0
KR170	BTC Essential works - Replace / upgrade doors, Lighting and control	0	195,000	195,000	0	0	0	0
KR179	Daneshill House boilers	0	197,000	197,000	0	0	0	0
KR180	Fry Road Nursery	0	80,000	80,000	0	0	0	0
KR181	All buildings across corporate estate	0	25,000	25,000	0	0	0	0
KE921	Improvement works to Hampson Park depot	4,075	0		0	0	0	0
	Estates Cont.							
KR171	Burwell Road shops - Reroofing,	0	58,947	58,947	0	0	0	0
KR172	MSCP fire door replacement	0	33,133	33,133	0	0	0	0
KR173	Commercial - shop units roof works	0	122,179	122,179	0	0	0	0
KR174	Commercial properties - General repairs	7,663	100,000	100,000	0	0	0	0
KR175	cavendish - IT server room works	0	65,000	65,000	0	0	0	0
KR176	King George V Pavilion - Works to existing Fascia boards	18,803	20,000	20,000	0	0	0	0
KR178	Cavendish - generator	0	90,000	90,000	0	0	0	0
KR916	Commercial Properties Refurbishment (MRC Programme)	5,720	359,671	359,671	0	0	0	0
KS278	New Management Software	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Estates	311,833	2,662,222	2,662,222	0	0	0	0
	Total Finance & Estates	311,833	2,662,222	2,662,222	0	0	0	0

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

		2025/26				2026/27		
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actual and Committed Costs	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Corporate Projects, Customer Services & Technology							
	IT General							
KS268	Infrastructure Investment	2,243	0	0	0	0	0	0
KS318	Core ICT Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KS320	Telephony Hardware Refresh 2425	0	75,638	75,638	0	0	0	0
KS321	VDI hosting Hardware Refresh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KS322	Hardware Replacment Program	0	75,225	75,225	0	0	0	0
KS323	Hardware Replacment Program (HRA Element)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KS324	SBC Idox Re-Tender, and Dell Memory (RAM) for Virtual desktop	0	131,860	131,860	0	0	0	0
	Total IT General	2,243	282,723	282,723	0	0	0	0
	Connected to Our Customer (CTOC)							
KS274	New CRM Technology	18,060	30,273	30,273	0	0	0	0
	Total CTOC	18,060	30,273	30,273	0	0	0	0
	Total Corporate Projects, Customer Services & Technology	20,303	312,996	312,996	0	0	0	0
	Regeneration							
KE506	Public Sector Hub	14,035	810,434	810,434	0	0	0	0
	Lease buy outs	0	379,750	379,750	0	0	0	0
KE947	SG1 Joint Venture	7,549,275	7,535,632	7,535,632	0	0	0	0
KE251	Parkplace - works ahead of Indoor Market relocation (Boston House)	0	1,100,000	1,100,000	0	0	0	0
Various	Towns Fund	3,797,268	21,842,167	21,842,167	0	1,300,781	1,300,781	(326,718)
	Total Regeneration	11,360,578	33,767,983	31,667,983	(2,100,000)	1,300,781	1,300,781	0

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

		2025/26				2026/27		
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actual and Committed Costs	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Community & Neighbourhoods							
KC202	Fairlands Valley Park - Aqua	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC232	SALC and the Swim Centre Urgent and H&S Works	53,181	17,021	17,021	0	0	0	0
KC242	SLL Leisure management - end of contract capital provision	31,696	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC237	Fire stopping works at SALC	8,225	77,819	77,819	0	0	0	0
KC255	Pool cover (to be grant funded)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KC238	Lift replacement at SALC	164,052	38,285	38,285	0	0	0	0
KC240	Replacement Camera programme	163	15,052	15,052	0	0	0	0
KC052	Shephalbury Park	8,690	10,600	10,600	0	0	0	0
KC236	Ridlins Athletics	56	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE917	Ridlins Athletics Facility	10,188	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	0
KC243	New Leisure Contract - roof works	0	27,000	27,000	0	0	0	0
KC245	Equipment replacement at Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre	0	31,887	31,887	0	0	0	0
KC246	Aqua Park - Rubber crumb surface replacement	0	35,000	35,000	0	0	0	0
KC247	Lighting of clock tower - permanent install	60,000	65,000	65,000	0	0	0	0
KC250	Fire stopping at SALC	0	220,000	220,000	0	0	0	0
KC252	Lift procurement at SALC	1,850	158,200	158,200	0	0	0	0
KC253	Sailing Centre	2,900	5,052	5,052	0	0	0	0
KE118	Lighting Desk SALC - Equipmt & Tools	800	158,680	158,680	0	0	0	0
KE606	Operational Plant	100,716	105,000	105,000	0	0	0	0
KE604	CCTV Upgrade	355,479	159,900	159,900	0	0	0	0
KE611	New pumps/aerators to FVP lakes	0	12,000	12,000	0	0	0	0
KC210	Riddlin - Bolier and Hot Water System	0	65,000	65,000	0	0	0	0
	Total Community & Neighbourhoods	797,996	1,206,496	1,211,496	5,000	0	0	0

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY



		2025/26				2026/27		
Cost Centre	Scheme	Actual and Committed Costs	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1	Q4 Capital Strategy	Q1 Working Budget	Variance Q4 v Q1
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	<u>Planning & Regulatory</u>							
KC244	Community Climate Change Fund	9,179	109,375	109,375	0	97,500	97,500	0
KC916	Street Scene UKSPF	6,987	68,645	68,645	0	0	0	0
KC917	St Georges MSCP - conversion of store room and boiler room to office space	30,645	37,171	37,171	0	0	0	0
KE119	Off Street Car Parks (Multi Storey Car Parks)	70,538	0	0	0	0	0	0
KE119	Phase 4 ENPR - Forum		70,000	70,000	0			
KE120	Park Place Remedials	4,904	54,644	54,644	0	0	0	0
KE201	Hard standings	0	16,444	16,444	0	0	0	0
KE217	Parking Restrictions	10,276	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	0
KE531	Workplace Travel Plan	12,338	8,563	8,563	0	0	0	0
KC918	MSCP Lift Reinstatement	0	200,000	200,000	0	0	0	0
KC919	Car Parks Resurfacing	4,475	140,000	140,000	0	0	0	0
KC920	Car Parks - Lighting Phased Replacement (2 years)	0	40,000	40,000	0	0	0	0
KC918	MSCP Painting	0	40,000	40,000	0	0	0	0
KC918	MSCP Fire Alarm Upgrade	0	25,000	25,000	0	0	0	0
	Total Planning & Regulatory	149,342	819,842	819,842	0	97,500	97,500	0
KR911	Deferred Works Reserve	0	196,732	196,732	0	0	0	0

Meeting:	AUDIT COMMITTEE/ CABINET / COUNCIL	Agenda Item:	
Portfolio Area:	Resources and Performance		
Date:	3 September 2025 / 17 September 2025 / 15 October 2025		

ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2024/25 AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

NON-KEY DECISION

Author – Rhona Bellis
Contributor – Reenu Keogh
Lead Officer – Clare Fletcher
Contact Officer – Clare Fletcher

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Note the annual Treasury Management Report for 2024/25.
- 1.2 Approve the actual 2024/25 prudential and treasury indicators in this report.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Audit Committee

That, subject to any comments by the Audit Committee to the Cabinet, the 2024/25 Annual Treasury Management Review be recommended to Council for approval.

2.2 Cabinet

That, subject to any comments made by the Audit Committee to the Cabinet, the 2024/25 Annual Treasury Management Review be recommended to Council for approval.

2.3 Council

That, subject to any comments from the Audit Committee and the Cabinet, the 2024/25 Annual Treasury Management Review be approved.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Regulatory Requirement

3.1.1 The Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2024/25. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

3.1.2 During 2024/25 the minimum reporting requirements were that the Council should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Council 21 February 2024)
- a mid-year treasury update report (Council 18 December 2024)
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report).

3.1.3 In addition the Prudential Indicators update at Q1 was reported to Cabinet in the Revenue and Capital Monitoring report – General Fund and HRA Q1, 18 September 2024.

3.1.4 In December 2017, CIPFA revised the Code to require, all local authorities to report on:

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services;
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed; and
- the implications for future financial sustainability.

These elements are covered in the annual Capital Strategy reported to Council in February each year.

3.1.5 The regulatory environment places responsibility on Members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is, therefore, important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by Members.

3.1.6 This report summarises:

- Capital activity during the year;
- Impact of this activity on the Council's underlying indebtedness (the Capital Financing Requirement);
- The actual prudential and treasury indicators;
- Overall treasury position identifying how the Council has borrowed in relation to this indebtedness, and the impact on investment balances;
- Summary of interest rate movements in the year;
- Detailed debt activity; and

- Detailed investment activity.

3.1.7 Officers confirm that they have complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to all of the above treasury management reports by the Audit Committee and the Cabinet before they were reported to the Council.

3.1.8 Member training on treasury management issues was undertaken during the year on 26 November 2024 in order to support members' scrutiny role.

3.2 Executive Summary

3.2.1 During 2024/25, the Council complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements as outlined in paragraph 3.1.1 above. These requirements include:

- The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low-risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.
- The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning, to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans or using longer-term cash flow surpluses. On occasion, when it is prudent and economic, any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

3.2.2 The key actual prudential and treasury indicators detailing the impact of capital expenditure activities during the year, with comparators, are as follows:

Table 1

Prudential and treasury indicators £000	31/3/2024 Actual	2024/25 Original Budget	31/03/2025 Actual
Capital expenditure			
GF	8,880	33,558	13,347
HRA	37,568	54,831	31,074
Total	46,448	88,389	44,421
Capital Financing Requirement			
GF	58,643	63,370	61,998

Prudential and treasury indicators £000	31/3/2024 Actual	2024/25 Original Budget	31/03/2025 Actual
HRA	272,384	284,060	272,356
Total	331,027	347,430	334,354
Gross borrowing¹	242,057	291,063	254,057
Investments			
Longer than 1 year	0	0	0
Under 1 year	25,202	42,151	46,132
Total	25,202	42,151	46,132
Net borrowing	216,855	250,125	227,057

- 3.2.3 There was reprofiling of planned capital expenditure from 2024/25 into future years resulted in an overall reduction in the use of borrowing to finance capital expenditure. Not all capital expenditure is funded from borrowing so the reduction in the capital financing requirement (the councils need to borrow) does not match the reduction in capital expenditure.
- 3.2.4 Other prudential and treasury indicators are to be found in the main body of this report. The Chief Finance Officer also confirms that borrowing (internal and external) was only undertaken for a capital purpose and the statutory borrowing limit (the authorised limit) was not breached.
- 3.2.5 It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limits. During the year the Council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2024/25.
- 3.2.6 All treasury management operations have also been conducted in full compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

4 THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FINANCING

- 4.1.1 Capital expenditure² can be financed either by capital resources the Council has on its balance sheet (e.g. capital receipts and capital grants) or by making a revenue contribution to capital. If sufficient capital resources are not available to fund the expenditure the Council would need to borrow to meet the funding gap. This borrowing may be taken externally in new loans or internally from cash balances held by the Council. The need to borrow is measured and reported through the Prudential Indicators.

¹ Excludes Finance Leases

² Council expenditure can be classified as capital when it is used to purchase assets with a life of more than one year, exceeds £10,000 in value and meets the guidelines laid out in CIPFA accounting practices.

- 4.1.2 The actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed.

Table 2

Capital Expenditure and Financing £000	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Original Budget	2024/25 Actual
General Fund			
Capital Expenditure:	8,880	33,558	13,347
Financed excluding borrowing	(4,700)	(32,492)	(9,167)
Unfinanced capital expenditure (borrowing)	4,180	1,066	4,060
HRA			
Capital Expenditure:	37,569	54,831	31,074
Financed excluding borrowing	(29,722)	(46,644)	(31,074)
Unfinanced capital expenditure (to be met from borrowing)	7,847	8,187	-

4.2 THE COUNCIL'S OVERALL BORROWING NEED

- 4.2.1 The Council's underlying need to borrow to finance capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). It represents the amount of debt it needs to/has taken out to fund the capital programme (and includes both internal and external borrowing). The CFR is then reduced as debt repayments are made, and Minimum Revenue Provisions are made. A separate CFR is calculated for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account and any transfers of assets (such as land or buildings) between the two accounts will impact on each fund's CFR. The CFR will go up on the fund "receiving" the assets and go down (by the same amount) on the fund "giving" the asset. There were no transfers of assets in 2024/25.
- 4.2.2 Part of the Council's treasury activities is to address the funding requirements for this borrowing need. Depending on the capital expenditure programme, the treasury service organises the Council's cash position to ensure that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital plans and cash flow requirements. This may be sourced through borrowing from external bodies, (such as the Government, through the Public Works Loan Board [PWLb], or the money markets), or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council.

- 4.2.3 Reducing the CFR – the Council's (non HRA) underlying borrowing need (CFR) is not allowed to rise indefinitely. Statutory controls are in place to ensure that capital assets are broadly charged to revenue over the life of the asset. The Council is required to make an annual revenue charge, called the Minimum Revenue Provision – MRP, to reduce the CFR. This is effectively a repayment of the non-Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing need, (there is no statutory requirement to reduce the HRA CFR). This differs from the treasury management arrangements which ensure that cash is available to meet capital commitments. External debt can also be borrowed or repaid at any time, but this does not change the CFR.
- 4.2.4 The total CFR can also be reduced by:
- the application of additional capital financing resources, (such as unapplied capital receipts); or
 - charging more than the statutory revenue charge (MRP) each year through a Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP).
- 4.2.5 The Council's 2023/24 Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (MRP), as required by MHCLG Guidance, was approved as part of the Treasury Management Strategy Report for 2024/25 on 21 February 2024.

The MRP charged to the General Fund in 2024/25 was £453,961 of which:

- £35,119 is funded from investment property
 - £41,000 if funded by the new multi storey car park (Railway North)
 - £128,261 is funded by the Garage Improvements Programme
 - £130,703 is a net cost to the General Fund
 - £118,878 charged for improvements to leisure facilities
- 4.2.6 The Council's CFR for the year is shown below and represents a key prudential indicator. It includes finance leases included on the balance sheet, which increase the Council's borrowing need. No borrowing is actually required against these schemes as a borrowing facility is included in the contract.

Table 3

CFR £000	31/03/2024 Actual	2024/25 Q3 Budget	31/03/2025 Actual
General Fund			
Opening balance	55,513	58,643	58,643
Add: unfinanced capital expenditure (as above)	4,180	5,375	4,060
Increase in finance lease obligations	-	-	1,121

CFR £000	31/03/2024 Actual	2024/25 Q3 Budget	31/03/2025 Actual
Less:			
Unfinanced capital expenditure from prior years now financed	(418)	(11)	(11)
Repayment of external borrowing	-	(1,000)	(1,000)
MRP / VRP	(374)	(454)	(454)
Finance lease repayments	(258)	(361)	(361)
Closing balance	58,643	62,192	61,998
Closing balance excluding finance lease	42,160	46,078	44,762
CFR (£000): HRA			
Opening balance	264,537	272,384	272,384
Add: Unfinanced capital expenditure (as above)	7,847	-	-
Finance lease repayments	-	-	(28)
Closing balance	272,384	272,384	272,356
Closing balance excluding finance lease³	271,051	271,051	271,051

4.2.7 Borrowing activity is constrained by prudential indicators for gross borrowing and the CFR, and by the authorised limit.

4.3 Limits to Borrowing Activity

4.4 Gross borrowing and the CFR - in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2023/24) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2024/25) and next two financial years. This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. This indicator allowed the Council some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs in 2024/25. The table below highlights the Council's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator.

Table 4

³ HRA leases 10 residential properties from Marshgate Ltd a wholly owned subsidiary of the council.

Limits to Borrowing £000	31/03/2024 Actual	2024/25 Budget	31/03/2025 Actual
Gross borrowing position	242,057	291,063	254,057
Finance Leases	17,808	17,419	18,540
CFR	(331,027)	(347,430)	(334,354)
(Under) / over funding of CFR – Internal Borrowing	(71,162)	(39,948)	(61,757)

- 4.5** The **authorised limit** - the authorised limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level. The table below demonstrates that during 2024/25 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.
- 4.6** The **operational boundary** – the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary are acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.
- 4.7** **Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream** - this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income), against the net revenue stream.

Table 5

Authorised limits	Operational Boundary £'000	Authorised Limit £'000	Actual External Debt 30/09/2022 £'000
Borrowing	354,503	362,503	246,849
Less Investments			(63,425)
Total	354,503	362,503	183,424

- 4.7.1** The ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream is equal to General Fund interest costs divided by the General Fund net revenue income from Council tax, Revenue Support Grant and retained business rates. For the HRA the net revenue stream is the income shown in the council’s accounts – rents, service charges and other income. The ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream reflects the relatively high level of debt as a result of the HRA self-financing deal with the government in 2012.
- 4.7.2** Fluctuations in external debt are not significant in 2024/25. The balance at the end of the year is materially lower than both the operational and authorised limits, thus the average and maximum debt balances are not recovered minimal,

external debt at the start of the year is, for 2024/25 the maximum debt outstanding end of the year is for 2024/25 is £1,000 lower than the maximum debt external outstanding debt in in the year.

4.8 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

TREASURY POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

4.8.1 The Council's treasury management debt and investment position is organised by the treasury management service in order to ensure adequate liquidity for revenue and capital activities, security for investments and to manage risks within all treasury management activities. Procedures and controls to achieve these objectives are well established both through Member reporting detailed in the summary, and through officer activity detailed in the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

4.8.2 At the end of 2024/25 the Council's treasury position (excluding finance leases), was as follows:

Table 6

Treasury Position (Excludes Finance Leases)	31/03/2024 Principal £000	Rate / Return 2023/24 %	Average Life 2023/24 (Yrs.)	31/03/2025 Principal £000	Rate / Return 2024/25 %	Average Life 2024/25 (Yrs.)
PWLB Borrowing	234,987	3.26	11	247,987	3.60	11
Other Borrowing (LEP)	7,070	-	6	6,070	-	5
Total External Debt	242,057	-	-	254,057	-	-
Capital Financing Requirement	(313,218)	-	-	(315,813)	-	-
Total Treasury Investments	25,202	5.19	<1	46,132	4.95	<1
Over/(Under) borrowing	(45,959)	-	-	(45,452)	-	-

The maturity structure of the external debt portfolio was as follows:

Table 7

Debt Maturity Structure £000	31.3.24 Actual	2024/25 Authorised Limit	31.3.25 Actual
Within 1 Year	-		500
Over 1 not over 2 years	500		8,000
Over 2 not over 5 years	28,056		30,656
Over 5 not over 10 years	55,100		84,400
Over 10 not over 20 years	145,821		106,431
Over 20 not over 30 years	5,510		18,000
Total PWLB Debt	234,987		247,987
LEP Loan:			

Debt Maturity Structure £000	31.3.24 Actual	2024/25 Authorised Limit	31.3.25 Actual
Within 1 Year	1,000		-
Over 1 not over 2 years	-		-
Over 5 not over 10 years	6,070		6,070
Total LEP Loan	7,070		6,070
Total Debt	242,057	391,764	254,057

4.8.3 The General Fund loan from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is in relation to regeneration activities.

The Councils Investment portfolio (Treasury and non-treasury investments) is as follows:

Table 8

Treasury investments (all managed in house)	31.3.24 Actual £000	31.3.24 Actual %	31.3.25 Actual £000	31.3.25 Actual %
Banks and Building Societies	19,499	77%	17,000	38%
Local authorities	5,300	21%	10,000	23%
Money Market Funds	403	2%	17,196	39%
Total treasury investments	25,202	100%	44,196	100%
Non-Treasury investments				
Subsidiaries (para 4.8.4)	11,931	100%	14,077	97%
Subsidiary Equity (Marshgate)	-	-	418	3%
Municipal Bond	10	-	10	-
Total Non-Treasury Investments	11,941	100%	14,505	100%
Treasury investments	25,202	68%	44,196	75%
Non-Treasury investments	11,941	32%	14,505	25%
Total of all Investments	37,143	100%	58,701	100%

The maturity structure of the investment portfolio is as follows:

Table 9

Investment Maturity Structure £000	31.3.24 Actual	31.3.25 Actual
Within 1 Year	34,164	56,316
Longer than 1 year	2,979	2,385
Total Investments	37,143	58,701

4.8.4 The non-treasury loans to the subsidiaries are made up of:

- Marshgate LTD (WOC), for the purchase and development of housing within the Borough in 2021/22 and 2022/23 £12,120K
- Swingate Developments LLP - £1,850K
- Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd - £107K

4.8.5 The equity investment in Marshgate Ltd reflects the equity element of member agreed funding that was formalised in 2024/25.

4.8.6 The increase in the treasury investment balances of £19Million between 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2025 reflects lower than expected capital expenditure in 2024/25 and the replenishment of HRA internal borrowing by £13Million additional borrowing from PWLB.

4.9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024/25

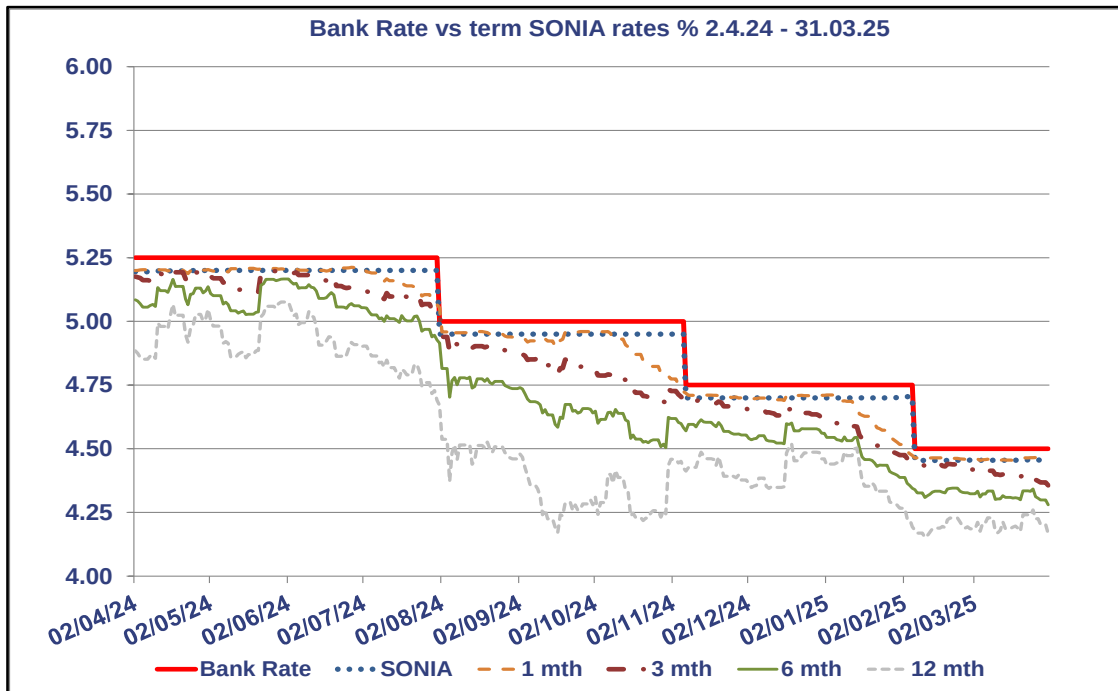
4.9.1 The Treasury Management Strategy was approved by Council on 21 February 2024.

There are no policy changes to the TMS; the details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic position and budgetary changes already approved.

4.10 Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk

4.10.1 Investment returns remained robust throughout the course of 2024/25 with bank rates reducing steadily through the course of the financial year from 5.25% to 4.5% as at 31 March 2025. Concerns over rising inflation led to reduced expectations for the Bank Rate to fall in the last half of the year.

4.10.2 Investment Benchmarking Data – Sterling Overnight Index Averages (Term) 2024/25



4.11 Borrowing strategy and control of interest rate risk

4.11.1 During 2024/25, the Council maintained an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), was not fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow was used as an interim measure. This strategy was prudent as although near-term investment rates were equal to, and sometimes higher than, long-term borrowing costs, the latter are expected to fall back through 2025 and 2026 in the light of economic growth concerns and the eventual dampening of inflation. The Council has sought to minimise the taking on of long-term borrowing at elevated levels (>5%) and has focused on a policy of internal borrowing, supplemented by short-dated borrowing (<5 years) as appropriate. risk. Although no short-term borrowing was taken out in 2024/25.

4.11.2 The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances has served the Council well over the last few years. However, this has been kept under review to avoid incurring higher borrowing costs in the future when the Council may not be able to avoid new borrowing to finance capital expenditure and/or the refinancing of maturing debt. The Council has taken some limited borrowing in 2024/25 to ensure the Council's cashflow position is resilient and to ensure that if interest rates increase, large amounts of borrowing required are not all taken at higher rates.

4.11.3 At the start of April 2025, following the introduction of President Trump's trade tariffs policies, the market now expects Bank Rate to fall to 3.75% by the end of March 2026.

Interest Rate Forecasts								
Bank Rate	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27
MUFG CM	4.25%	4.00%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%
Cap Econ	4.00%	3.75%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%
5Y PWLB RATE								
MUFG CM	4.80%	4.70%	4.60%	4.50%	4.40%	4.40%	4.30%	4.20%
Cap Econ	4.80%	4.70%	4.60%	4.50%	4.50%	4.40%	4.40%	4.40%
10Y PWLB RATE								
MUFG CM	5.10%	5.00%	4.90%	4.80%	4.70%	4.70%	4.60%	4.50%
Cap Econ	5.20%	5.10%	5.00%	5.00%	4.90%	4.80%	4.80%	4.80%
25Y PWLB RATE								
MUFG CM	5.60%	5.50%	5.40%	5.30%	5.20%	5.10%	5.00%	5.00%
Cap Econ	5.70%	5.40%	5.30%	5.20%	5.10%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
50Y PWLB RATE								
MUFG CM	5.30%	5.20%	5.10%	5.00%	4.90%	4.80%	4.70%	4.70%
Cap Econ	5.50%	5.20%	5.20%	5.10%	5.00%	4.90%	4.90%	4.90%

4.11.4 The PWLB certainty rate is gilts plus 80bps. Gilt yields have generally been on a continual rise since early 2022, remaining elevated throughout 2024/25 due to both the impacts of global and domestic economic conditions.

4.11.5 There is likely to be a fall in gilt yields and PWLB rates across the whole curve over the next one to two years as Bank Rates falls and inflation (on the CPI measure) moved closer to the Bank of England's 2% target.

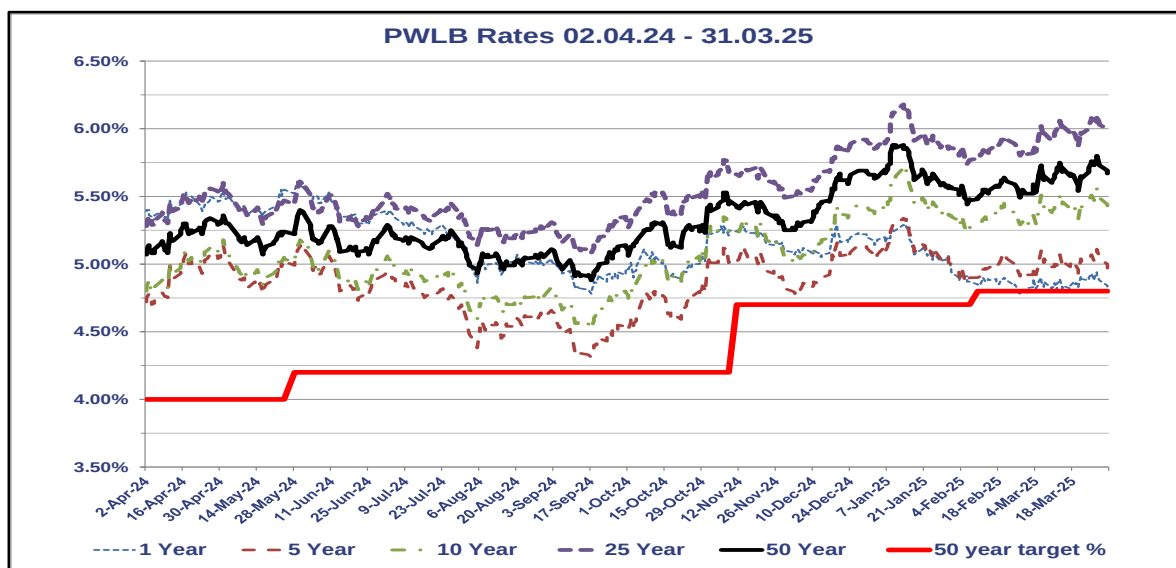
4.11.6 As a general rule, short-dated gilt yields will reflect expected movements in Bank Rate, whilst medium to long-dated yields are driven primarily by the inflation outlook.

4.11.7 The Bank of England is continuing on a process of Quantitative Tightening. The gradual reduction of the Bank's original £895Billion stock of gilt and corporate bonds will be sold back into the market over several years (currently c£623Billion). The impact this policy will have on the market pricing of gilts, while issuance is markedly increasing, is an unknown at the time of writing.

4.11.8 The Chart below shows the volatility of the PWLB borrowing rates from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025.

PWLB RATES 2024/25

Chart 1



4.12 BORROWING OUTTURN

4.12.1 Two new loans were taken out in the year. These were to refinance HRA internal borrowing, details being:

- £7.5Million loan taken from 17 April 2024 to 16 April 2045 at an annual interest rate of 4.87% and
- £5.5Million loan taken from 2 July 2024 to 1 July 2045 at an annual interest rate of 4.88%.

4.12.2 Interest paid on PWLB borrowing during the year was £ 8.3Million – Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and £40K - General Fund (GF). This was against an original budget of £8.9Million. The favourable variance of £0.6Million is due to reduced capital expenditure in year against plan as well as the use of internal resources to fund capital expenditure while still overachieving on investment income versus latest budget.

4.13 INVESTMENT OUTTURN

4.13.1 Investment Policy – the Council's investment policy is governed by MHCLG investment guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by the Council on 21 February 2024. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data, (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc.).

4.13.2 The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the Authority had no liquidity difficulties.

4.13.3 In accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy, the Council invests its surplus cash balances that are committed for future approved spending. The policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties and is based

on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data and counterparty limits dependant on level of cash balances held.

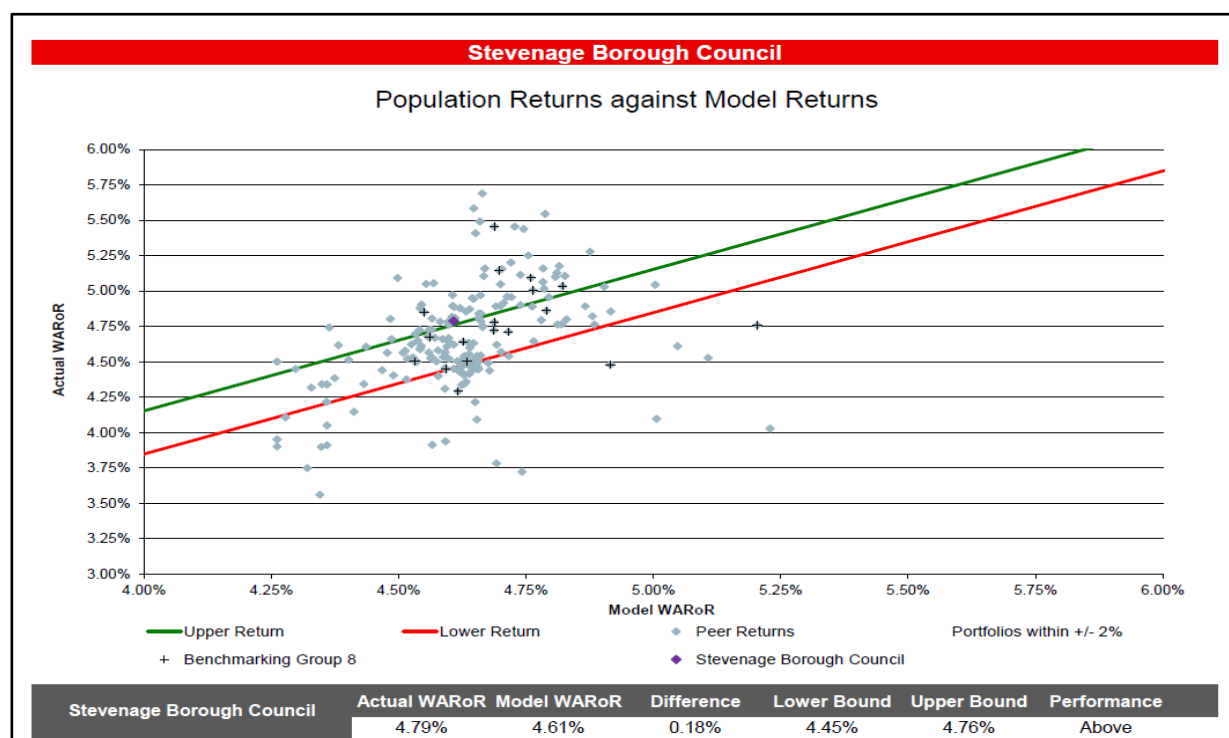
4.14 Treasury Investment performance year to date as of 31 March 2025

4.14.1 The Council's current treasury investment portfolio consists of "conventional" cash investments: deposits with banks and building societies, Money Market Funds and loans to other Local Authorities. No investments have been made with any of the other approved instruments within the Specified and Non-specified Investment Criteria.

4.14.2 Average level of funding available for investment purposes during the year was £50Million, earning an average interest rate of 4.95%. Interest earned to 31 March 2025 was £2.3Million on treasury investments, against the working budget of £2.3Million.

4.14.3 The council's treasury advisors (MUFG), provide regular benchmarking analysis of the performance of the council's investments against a group of 20 other local authorities. The March 2025 report shows performance of the portfolio held at 31 March 2025 being in the upper return range against model returns. This performance is consistent across the year.⁴

Chart 2



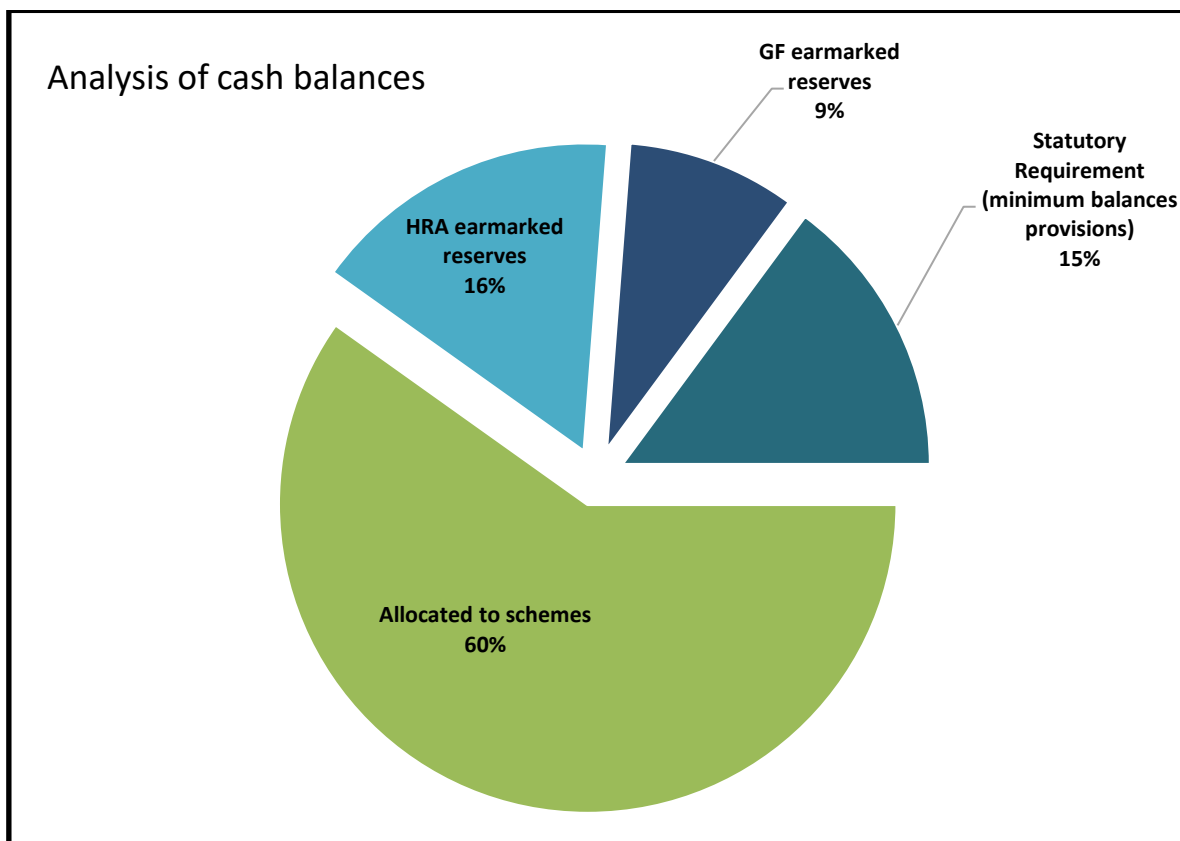
⁴ WARoR = Weighted average rate of return on investments

4.14.4 The Council's balances are made up of cash reserves e.g. HRA and General Fund balances, restricted use receipts e.g. right to buy one for one receipts and balances held for provisions such as business rate appeals.

4.14.5 In considering the Council's level of cash balances, Members should note that the General Fund MTFs and Capital Strategy have a planned use of resources over a minimum of 5 years and the HRA Business Plan (HRA BP) a planned use of resources over a 30-year period, which means, while not committed in the current year, they are required in future years.

4.14.6 The following chart shows the planned use of cash balances as at 31 March 2025.

Chart 3



4.14.7 The restrictive use of a proportion of the cash balances set out above, plus the planned use of resources in line with the Council's capital and revenue strategies mean that the investment balance of £46Million as at 31 March 25 is not available to fund new expenditure.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 This report is of a financial nature and reviews the treasury management function for 2024/25. Any consequential financial impacts identified in the Capital strategy and Revenue budget monitoring reports have been incorporated into this report.
- 5.1.2 During the financial year Officers operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and in compliance with the Council's Treasury management practices.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 Approval of the Prudential Code Indicators and the Treasury Management Strategy are intended to ensure that the Council complies with relevant legislation and best practice.
- 5.2.2 There have been no changes to PWLB borrowing arrangements since the last Treasury report. Officers will ensure that any changes to the Prudential and Treasury Management codes from 2025/26 are reflected in treasury operations and reporting requirements.

5.3 Risk Implications

- 5.3.1 The current policy of minimising external borrowing internally where appropriate, taking advantage of the benefits differentials between investment income and borrowing rates is kept under ongoing review as these conditions change. This policy only remains financially viable while cash balances are high. Capital investment, not funded by capital receipts and grant funding reduce these balances if not supported by additional borrowing. The risk is that the Council may need to take borrowing at higher rates than budgeted which would increase revenue costs.
- 5.3.2 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy is based on limits for counterparties to reduce risk of investing with only a small number of institutions.
- 5.3.3 The thresholds and time limits set for investments in the Strategy are based on the relative ratings of investment vehicles and counter parties. These are designed to take into account the relative risk of investments and also to preclude certain grades of investments and counterparties to prevent loss of income to the Council.
- 5.3.4 There is a risk to the HRA BP's ability to fund the approved 30-year spending plans if interest rates continue at the current high level, although currently it is anticipated that rates will reduce. This will be included in the HRA MTFS forecast in 2025.

5.4 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.4.1 This report is technical in nature and there are no implications associated with equalities and diversity within this report. In addition to remaining within agreed counterparty rules, the council retains the discretion not to invest in countries that meet the minimum rating but where there are concerns over human rights issues. Counterparty rules will also be overlaid by any other ethical considerations from time to time as appropriate.

5.4.2 The Treasury Management Policy does not have the potential to discriminate against people on grounds of age; disability; gender; ethnicity; sexual orientation; religion/belief; or by way of financial exclusion. As such a detailed Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken.

5.5 Climate Change Implications

There are no specific climate change implications resulting from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- BD1 Treasury Management Strategy including Prudential Code Indicators 2024/25 (Council 21 February 2024)
- BD2 2024/25 Mid-Year Treasury Management Review and Prudential Indicators (Council 18 December 2024)

APPENDICES

- Appendix A - Investment and PWLB Debt Portfolio

Appendix A

Portfolio Summary for Stevenage Borough Council

Show in Excel, hide from Web

Investments

Institution	Principal
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd. (3)	£9,000,000
Basildon District Council (1)	£5,000,000
Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen Girozentrale (2)	£6,000,000
Lloyds Bank Plc (RFB) (1)	£2,000,000
MMF Aberdeen (1)	£10,000,000
MMF CCLA (1)	£8,100,000
MMF Morgan Stanley (1)	£340,000
North Northamptonshire Council (1)	£5,000,000
HSBC	£692,000
	£46,132,000

Debt

HRA or GF	Loan Type	Principal
GF	PWLB > Maturity	£1,755,950
	Total	£1,755,950
HRA	PWLB > Maturity	£246,231,150
	Total	£246,231,150
Total	Total	£247,987,100

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Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area All
Date 17 September 2025



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER ONE 2025/26

KEY DECISION

Authors Chloe Pullen
Daryl Jedowski
Contributor Strategic Leadership Team
Lead Officers Tom Pike
Richard Protheroe
Contact Officer Richard Protheroe

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and projects for Quarter 1 2025/26 and provide an update on progress against current strategic risks.
- 1.2 For Member's information, a presentation will be provided at the Cabinet meeting which will cover updates in relation to delivery against Corporate Plan Priorities and the key themes emerging from the Quarter 1 performance data.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the service performance against 53 corporate performance measures and progress of key projects in Quarter 1 2025/26 through the Making Stevenage Even Better Programme (Appendix A) be noted.
- 2.2 That the issues with the Repairs fixed first time measure are noted (section 4.3.2).

- 2.3 That the work to create a new suite of Damp & Mould measures to support the introduction of AWAAB's law be noted (section 4.3.6).
- 2.4 That the Regulator of Social Housing Provider Improvement Plan (PIP) be noted (section 4.4.5).
- 2.5 That the strategic risk updates (section 4.7) be noted.
- 2.6 That the revised Risk Management Policy (Appendix D), with formal approval to be given by the Chief Executive and the Portfolio Holder following consideration of any further comments from Cabinet, be noted.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 In January 2024, the Cabinet agreed the new Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan until 2027. This includes five strategic priorities:

- Transforming Our Town
- More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes
- Thriving Neighbourhoods
- Tackling Climate Change
- Balancing the Budget

The plan also includes three Cross-cutting themes:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Health & Wellbeing
- Technology & Innovation

3.2 The plan was subsequently approved at Full Council in February 2024. The corporate performance suite was also updated to reflect existing and future programmes of work, resident priorities and regulatory and legislative housing requirements.

3.3 The Council's approach to performance management demonstrates a clear link between service delivery and the strategic objectives in the MSEB Corporate Plan. By aligning performance measures and projects under the 5 strategic priorities, a 'golden thread' linking what the Council delivers to the fulfilment of its strategic outcomes can be clearly seen. By taking this approach, the Council can simplify and streamline how performance monitoring and progress are communicated to Members and residents.

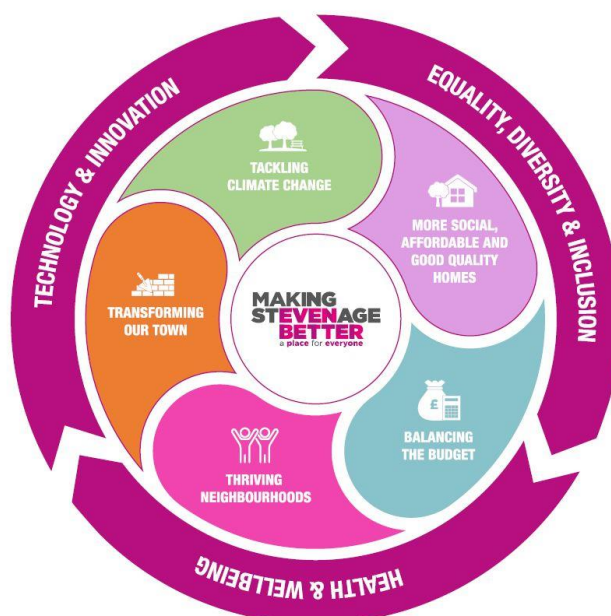


Fig 1.

- 3.4 The Corporate Performance Suite for 2025/26 contains 53 measures which are aligned with the 5 MSEB strategic priorities. The 53 measures are complemented by statutory and local measures which are managed internally with performance overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 3.5 There are 10 baseline measures within the corporate performance suite. The majority of these reflect the increased regulation and focus on housing compliance. Baseline measures provide a starting point from which to assess and compare performance in the future. The remaining 43 measures are relevant to the Council's focus on what matters to residents and progress made against the MSEB objectives.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 QUARTER ONE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

- 4.1.1 As outlined in section 3, the corporate performance suite has been aligned with the five MSEB priorities set out in Figure 1. Progress against performance measures is presented alongside key projects. By taking this mixed-method approach, the Council is able to present a holistic overview of its performance activity. This helps demonstrate to residents that the Council is on track to deliver key projects, programmes and service improvements associated with MSEB, as well as highlighting performance against key service delivery targets.
- 4.1.2 Key highlights from the MSEB programmes are summarised in section 4.2. For further information on the aims and objectives of the MSEB programme in 2025/26, please refer to MSEB Priorities & Projects 2025/26, which was presented to the Cabinet in July 2025: [MSEB Priorities & Projects 2025/26](#)
- 4.1.3 The total number of measures by Red, Amber & Green (RAG) rating is shown in Figure 2 below. The full set of current corporate performance measures results and MSEB projects are attached at Appendix A.

Q1 2025/26 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW						
MSEB Programme	Baseline measure for 2025-26	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (Within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (Urgent improvement action required)	Unavailable Data	Projects Reported Qtr. 1
More Social Affordable and Good Quality Homes (25 measures)	8	14	0	1	2	20
Transforming Our Town (3 measures)	0	3	0	0	0	15

Q1 2025/26 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW						
Thriving Neighbourhoods (12 measures)	2	10*	0	0	0	10
	*The data for 'NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs)' and 'NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting' comes from an external source and is only available a quarter in arrears, therefore will be reported this way					
Tackling Climate Change (1 measures)	0	1	0	0	0	7
Balancing the Budget (12 measures)	0	11	1	0	0	7
Cross Cutting (0 measures)	0	0	0	0	0	7
TOTAL (53)	10	39	1	1	2	66

Fig 2.

4.1.4 There were several strong areas of performance this quarter which are highlighted below:

- Rent Collection Rate is high at 93.28%, in comparison to 89.44% in Q1 2024/25.
- Compliance certification and documentation for Gas Safety, Fire Safety, Asbestos, Legionella and Lifts are at 100%.
- There are no overdue Fire Remedial Actions outstanding; this has reduced from 286 medium overdue actions and 312 low overdue actions in Quarter 2 2024/25.
- Satisfaction with the CSC customer service remains high at 93%; however, as always, it is recognised that there is still room for further improvement to be made in this area.
- All Planning measures have achieved their targets, with 100% of major applications being determined within target timescales.

4.2 MSEB PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

4.2.1 Alongside performance, the council also captures quarterly updates on the milestones associated with the strategic priorities set out in the MSEB Corporate Plan and subsequent service planning and priority setting activities. All programmes have made progress on the projects agreed at Cabinet in July 2025, with Quarter 1 highlights including:

- 4.2.1.1 Foundation work has been completed at Burwell Phase Two, and brick and block work is underway. The opportunity to bring in Homes England funding is currently being explored.
- 4.2.1.2 Demolition of Walpole Court has been completed to progress Phase 2 of the Kenilworth development. Works to appoint an estate agent have been completed.

- 4.2.1.3 A contractor has been appointed for the first phase of The Oval, with a start on site forecast for Quarter 3 2025/26. Additional grant funding from Homes England has been awarded, with an extra £11.2 million granted for the delivery of affordable housing at the start of the scheme.
- 4.2.1.4 All works to complete the MRC Programme have been issued, and the programme is on track for completion in 2025/26.
- 4.2.1.5 Guidance for the implementation of Awaab's law in October 2025 has now been released and is currently being reviewed against the current policy and procedures. Consultation on a new Decent Homes Standard and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard have been released. The team are currently reviewing the documentation and drafting a proposed response by the September deadline.
- 4.2.1.6 HR invited managers to express their interest in hosting a corporate apprentice post in six new corporate apprenticeships, with the roles confirmed in June. The positions are as follows:
- Finance Apprentice - degree level
 - Building Surveyor (Estates) - degree level
 - Surveyor (Housing Asset Management) - degree level
 - Culture, Leisure, and Wellbeing - level 3
 - Regulatory Compliance Apprentice (Env Health and Licensing) - level 4
 - Arborist Apprentice - level 3
- 4.2.1.7 Additionally, two further apprentice roles have been advertised and funded by Business Units: a second Arborist Apprenticeship and a Health and Safety Apprenticeship. The advertisement went live in July 2025, with assessment and appointment expected to be complete by the end of Q2.
- 4.2.1.8 Funding for a 5 year, £1.1m Phase Two extension of the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme was approved by SBC Cabinet and Mission 44 Board in Q1. Phase Two expands the breadth and the depth of existing interventions and includes a new peer-to-peer mentoring scheme, a partnership with Airbus Space & Defence and the creation of a Youth Innovation Fund. The council continues to work closely with its key strategic partners: The University of Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire College & Hertfordshire Futures in order to drive this work forward. Delivery of interventions will begin from the start of the school term in September 2025.
- 4.2.1.9 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has been extended through 2025/26 with an additional £327k in funding being awarded to SBC. This funding has been received from Government in Q1, and delivery has begun. The next milestone is the mid-year reporting window to MHCLG, which will be completed by the end of Q2. However, following the Governments Spending Review in June 2025, it was announced that no further tranches of UKSPF will be allocated. The scheme will be replaced by a new Local Growth Funding pot, with details around allocations and criteria still to be announced.
- 4.2.1.10 The Council has now partnered with the National Energy Foundation for the delivery of the Warm Homes Local Grant. This will help eligible households to install energy efficient measures and reduce energy bills, improve home comfort and lower carbon emissions.

4.2.1.11 In Quarter 1 the Council registered as a supplier on the UK Governments Central Digital Platform, which will allow Stevenage BC services to bid for large public sector contracts.

4.2.2 Further details on the projects included in the MSEB programmes and corporate highlights can be found in Appendix A.

4.3 PERFORMANCE MEASURES – AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

4.3.1 As highlighted in Figure 2, there is one measure that is red this quarter, 'Rep4: Percentage of repairs fixed first time'. The table below outlines the actual performance and the target that was set for the performance measure. The paragraphs that follow set out the reasons for improvement in Quarter 1.

<u>MEASURE NAME</u>	<u>BUSINESS UNIT</u>	Actual Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual – Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD
More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes								
Rep4: Percentage of repairs fixed first time	Building Safety & Housing Property Services	96.79%	97.19%	95.83%	93.07%	84.86%	90%	90%

Fig.3

Rep4: Percentage of repairs and inspections completed first time

4.3.2 The percentage of repairs fixed first time was 84.86% against a target of 90% for Q1. 3739 of 4406 repairs were fixed first time, with 667 jobs needing to be returned to.

4.3.3 Following analysis of the dataset, the measure has been renamed to better reflect the way activity is currently captured, recognising that within the current data structure repairs and inspections are recorded and monitored together, so the Q1 figure reports both activities combined. Data sources and definitions are being refined ahead of the Q2 Corporate Performance Report to introduce a clearer and more robust set of measures that distinguish activity and outcomes and support targeted service improvements.

4.3.4 The Repairs service has been identified as a challenging service area, and improvements plans are in place. A new management team has been appointed, support contractors have been procured, policies have been updated, and processes have been reviewed to improve the customer experience and the efficiency of the service, which should feed through in terms of KPI data. The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) are showing an upward trajectory in customer satisfaction with repairs and driving further improvement is a key focus of the service plans for this year.

4.3.5 There are various reasons why jobs can't be completed first time, including unavailability of materials, second or different trade required. Wherever possible, jobs are completed alongside an inspection subject to these types of issues not preventing this from being the case. Further investigation into reasons for the KPI target not being met will be undertaken alongside monitoring

of performance trends to understand whether planned improvements are having a positive impact on direction of travel and/or if other corrective actions can and should be taken to bring performance back in line with the target.

MISSING MEASURES

- 4.3.6 There are two measures this quarter that cannot currently be reported on:
- % of tenants satisfied with how their complaint was handled (stage one)
 - % of tenants satisfied with how their complaint was handled (stage two)

TENANT COMPLAINT SATISFACTION KPIS

- 4.3.7 As part of the rollout of the Council's new Complaints Handling System, the approach to transactional surveys has changed.
- 4.3.8 The Council has implemented a new, fully automated process through the GovMetric platform, but surveys will recommence from July onwards, so there are no transactional surveys available for Q1.
- 4.3.9 The Council's Housing Service is still collating data on complaint satisfaction through our TSM. Compared with our initial 2023/24 results, our 2024/25 figures are significantly improved in this regard. This measure serves to augment that dataset and provide further insight from residents.

PERFORMANCE CLINICS

- 4.3.10 In Quarter 1 the council have conducted two performance clinics, with a further session completed at the start of Quarter 2 on the 19th August. These sessions involve key officers and are designed to take a deep dive into challenges and explore improvement opportunities. The three areas of focus were:
- **Customer Service Centre** – with a specific focus on workforce recruitment & retention, service optimisation
 - **Corporate and Community Asset Remediation** – with a specific focus on Fire Risk Assessment remedials and compliance
 - **Damp, Mould, and Disrepair** – focusing on addressing recruitment issues, rising service demands, and new legislative requirements
- 4.3.11 Where required, follow up sessions have been arranged and will take place throughout Q2. Key outcomes and actions from the sessions have been collated in Improvement plans which will be monitored going forward. Future quarterly performance reporting will continue to provide updates on progress as well as highlight any additional performance clinics that have been undertaken or are scheduled.

4.4 NATIONAL STRATEGY & POLICY LANDSCAPE

- 4.4.1 The Council has undertaken horizon scanning to apprise Cabinet of the emerging central government strategy and policy landscape. This work has already been shared with Cabinet and provides an early view of potential opportunities, risks, and delivery implications arising from recent national announcements and the wider direction of central government.

- 4.4.2 The analysis is mapped to the council's Corporate Plan, Making Stevenage Even Better, so there is a clear line of sight between national priorities and the Council's local ambitions. This alignment supports prioritisation, informs bids and business cases, strengthens risk management and performance reporting, and helps plan capacity, resources, and partnerships in a way that keeps delivery focused on resident outcomes.
- 4.4.3 Looking ahead, this horizon scan positions the Council to act with confidence through Local Government Reorganisation and wider sector change. The Council is committed to turning national intent into local impact, using the evolving policy landscape to unlock investment, accelerate regeneration and skills, and shape services around neighbourhoods. The aim is to sustain momentum on the Corporate Plan, protect outcomes, and keep Stevenage moving forward for residents and businesses as reforms progress.

4.5 TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES (TSM) AND RSH PROVIDER IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

- 4.5.1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures were introduced in 2023/24 as a Regulatory requirement for all social landlords in England. There are 22 TSMs – of which 12 are sourced from a tenant perception survey. The Council has commissioned Housemark to conduct the tenant perception surveys quarterly during 2024/25. The Council is required to complete at least 570 surveys for its stock size; however, for 2025/26, 1000 responses will be collated over the year to ensure further statistical accuracy. The aim is for 90% of surveys to be completed over the phone with the remaining 10% online. These surveys are undertaken quarterly, and so a rolling update is able to be provided to help with transparency and timely consideration of the feedback provided.
- 4.5.2 In Quarter 1 for 2025/26, 250 surveys were completed. The Q1 satisfaction results can be seen in the table below:

Ref	Question	2025/26	Previous year (2024/25)	Difference (+/-)
TP01	Overall satisfaction	70.4%	66.9%	+3.5%
TP02	Repairs service overall	74.5%	70.8%	+3.7%
TP03	Speed of repairs	68.8%	64.4%	+4.4%
TP04	Home is well-maintained	68.5%	67.7%	+0.8%
TP05	Home is safe	79.8%	76.4%	+3.4%
TP06	Listens to views and acts	59.5%	55.1%	+4.4%
TP07	Keeps tenants informed	68.6%	61.6%	+7.0%
TP08	Treats tenants fairly and with respect	79.3%	73.3%	+6.0%
TP09	Complaint handling	38.6%	34.1%	+4.5%

Fig 4

Ref	Question	2025/26	Previous year (2024/25)	Difference (+/-)
TP10	Communal areas are clean and well-maintained	64.5%	64.0%	+0.5%
TP11	Contribution to neighbourhood	78.5%	63.1%	+15.4%
TP12	ASB handling	67.9%	57.9%	+10.0%

4.5.3 The Council has seen an improvement across all twelve measures compared to the year-end data for 2024/25 year end data, with the cumulative overall satisfaction at 70.4% representing an increase of 3.5%. The highest increase relates to satisfaction with the contribution to neighbourhood, which is now at 78.5% an increase of 15.4%, which, from the feedback, is in part aligned to the 10% increase with the way in which ASB cases were dealt with. Tenants are most satisfied, as in previous data, with being provided with a home that is safe at 79.8% which also has increased, representing an increase of 3.4%.

4.5.4 The ongoing increase in satisfaction is encouraging, and whilst there has been a reduction in levels of unsatisfaction, the way that the survey is structured means that satisfaction does not include those who are neither satisfied or dissatisfied, and these levels have generally remained similar. Feedback on wider national analysis of the data has shown that whilst satisfaction may improve, there is a need to understand that continued increases in satisfaction are unsustainable and that performance can plateau, and that maintenance and sustainability of levels should become part of the service approach rather than seeking continually improving data. At the current time there is continued improvement, but this trend is not sustainable and should be noted.

REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDER IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

4.5.5 In November 2024 the Council was notified by the Regulator of Social Housing that it has been awarded a C2 grade following an on-site inspection against the Consumer Standards. Cabinet was notified of the inspection outcome in December 2024. As part of the regulatory regime, following an inspection all landlords are required to develop, in association with the Regulator a Provider Improvement Plan (PIP), as part of the development of this plan it was agreed that Cabinet would receive regular updates on this plan as part of the Corporate Performance Framework.

4.5.6 The Council has established regular review meetings with the Regulator, initially these took place, but the Regulator has now asked that the reviews take place quarterly, as they have been assured that the Council has made good progress in key areas of the plan, and in recognition that a number of the planned works will now take some time to undertake, embed and complete. The most recent PIP, which was provided to the Regulator on the 29 July, in advance of the planned meeting on the 6 August, is included as a Background Document to this report.

4.5.7 Key points to note from the most recent update would include:

- Some of the procurement related activities have revised timescales. However, whilst work continues on these workstreams, the current interim arrangements have continued, and this means that the team are able to continue to improve the overall position.
- The high-rise improvement work continues, and the team are also ensuring that this now reflects the work that is coming forward as a result of the feedback from the Building Safety Regulator.
- Information for residents continues to improve, with further enhancements to the website; this now includes the new annual TSM data for 24/25. The next newsletter is planned to go out mid-August, and the Annual Housing Report and Annual Tenants Report are to be signed off by the Executive Housing Working Group next month and they will then be published and promoted through social media and online.
- The new resident engagement manager has now started. The role will initially focus on the strengthening of the scrutiny arrangements, the caretaking review and embedding this new role in the service. The team continues to improve our approach to engaging residents with work now underway on the updated rent policy, with consultation on this starting later in the month.
- The approach to gathering and using tenant profile information is developing, and the team is undertaking a data review and improving the way that we manage and use the data in our system. With data now being used to help in the new HRA Business Plan for the first time.

4.5.8 The Housing Service is continuing to progress the actions set out within the plan and will continue to provide updates to Cabinet as the engagement with the Regulator of Social Housing continues.

4.5 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT HANDLING

4.5.1 As set out within the Councils Complaints Policy, residents are able to contact either the Housing Ombudsman Service, mainly for issues which relate to the Council as a landlord, or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSO) for areas such as homelessness, the housing register and associated advice. Both Ombudsman services will independently consider cases where they have been approached by residents and will then come to a determination concerning the matters which have been raised.

4.5.2 In line with the Housing Ombudsman's Statutory Code of Complaint Handling, the Council is required to report the outcome of such cases, and this will be provided to Cabinet on a quarterly basis, and this report will provide that detail. The table in Appendix B provides details of the 4 cases where an Ombudsman has made a determination in the quarter. In this period 3 cases were determined by the Housing Ombudsman and 1 by the LGSCO. In all cases the orders or agreed actions have been completed.

4.5.3 The Council is currently finalising its Annual Self-Assessment of Complaint Handling against the Housing Ombudsman's Code, which it is required to publish annually, whilst work on the new Annual Housing Complaint Report is now underway, and both will be reported to future meetings for consideration prior to publication. The Councils new Complaint Handling System is now online; the Housing Complaint Clinic continues with the purpose of reviewing trends and undertaking root cause analysis to help drive improvements and learning. New transactional surveys for complaint handling have now started as part of the Councils new system, and details of these will be included in future

- 4.5.4 Tenant Satisfaction Measure Perception Surveys for the year indicate that 38.6% of respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with the handling of their complaint, which represents an improvement of 4.5% compared to the 2024/25 year end figure.
- 4.5.5 As part of the Housing Complaint Management process, full details and information are considered by the Housing Complaint Handling Clinic which includes the Strategic Director, the Housing Portfolio Holder and other senior officers. As part of the clinic's work, it receives individual reports and reviews on all stage 2 cases, along with those that may progress to the Ombudsman, to ensure robust responses and investigations have been undertaken. The clinic also monitors where improvements and learning have been identified.

4.6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

- 4.6.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has launched a new Local Government Outcomes Framework (LGOF), designed to replace the Office for Local Government (OFLOG), which was closed earlier this year. The LGOF sets out a national suite of outcome and output metrics intended to improve transparency, benchmarking, and accountability in local government service delivery.
- 4.6.2 The current consultation proposes 15 outcome themes, supported by 103 metrics, comprising:
- 74 Outcome Metrics
 - 29 Output Metrics
- 4.6.3 These themes span housing, homelessness, health, adult social care, the environment, neighbourhoods, and the economy. This work has reviewed the full proposed metric set and aligned each theme with the Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan, service responsibilities, and relevant officer and member leads. Consultation closes on 13 September, with the Framework likely coming into effect from Spring/Summer 2026.
- 4.6.4 Further updates on the Local Government Outcome Framework will come via this report. A breakdown of the measures included is available at Appendix C.

4.7 STRATEGIC RISK

- 4.7.1 The strategic risks were considered by Corporate Risk Group on 23 July 2025, agreed to by the Senior Leadership Team on 12 August 2025 and considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 3 September 2025.
- 4.7.2 The Audit Committee receives a detailed Strategic Risk Report each quarter. The report to the Audit Committee considers the actions which have been identified to mitigate each of the identified risks and the progress of those actions. Changes to the way risk is managed at the Council are also highlighted and considered by the Audit Committee. Where the Committee raises specific concerns about the risks or the process for managing them, these are highlighted to the Cabinet within this quarterly report.

HIGHLIGHTED RISKS

- 4.7.3 Two new risks have been added to the Strategic Risk Register this quarter: Community Cohesion and Awaab's Law, reflecting recent / emerging changes in the strategic risk environment. Both risks have begun to be considered

through the Council's formal risk reporting process. Mitigations and monitoring arrangements are in place and will be tracked through the quarterly reporting cycle. A further change to highlight this quarter is that the Commercialisation risk has been downgraded to medium, based on a consistent record of delivery and a subsequent reduction in the assessed likelihood of the risk materialising.

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

- 4.7.4 The Policy has been reviewed and updated in line with the scheduled two-year review cycle. While the core principles remain unchanged, the policy has been substantially rewritten to reflect current best practice and improve clarity. The purpose of the Risk Management Policy is to provide a consistent framework for identifying, assessing, and managing risks across the organisation. It supports informed decision-making, strengthens governance, and helps ensure that risks are proactively managed in pursuit of the Council's priorities. A well-embedded approach to risk management also enhances resilience, improves service delivery, and supports compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.
- 4.7.5 Key changes include:
- A revised Policy Statement, now aligned with LGA guidance and positioned at the front of the document.
 - Inclusion of key concepts to support a shared understanding of risk management across the organisation
 - Updated five-step risk management process, supported by an updated guide for staff and a template that can be used for project / programme risk registers (appended to the policy).
 - Clearer definition of roles and responsibilities.
- 4.7.6 The draft policy has been considered by the Corporate Risk Group, Senior Leadership Team, and Audit Committee. The final version will be approved by the Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for delivering the priorities over the coming year and implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to identify and consider any resulting financial implications. Any financial impact of the under/over achievement of Corporate Performance Indicators will be reported as part of the Quarterly Monitoring report.

5.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.2.1 There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for delivering the priorities over the coming year and implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to identify and consider any resulting legal implications.

5.3 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.3.1 There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications arising from this report. Where required, Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for programmes, projects, service changes and improvement activity identified.

5.4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.4.1 There are no direct significant risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendation(s). However, officers responsible for implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to consider any risk implications that arise.
- 5.4.2 The Council has an embedded approach to risk management that mitigates any adverse effect on delivery of the Council's objectives and internal control processes and provides good governance assurance.

5.5 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.5.1 The Council declared a climate change emergency in June 2019 with a resolution to work towards a target of achieving net zero emissions by 2030. There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report, except for those activities that seek to have a positive impact in this area, and the officers responsible for delivering the improvements are charged with identifying and addressing any related climate change considerations.

5.6 OTHER CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.6.1 Implementing the priorities and improvement activity outlined in this report may impact on the development of future policy or procedure, which will be monitored through the formal policy/procedure sign-off process via the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

6 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Strategic Risk Register (Part II Audit Committee Report)
- Annual Governance Statement 2024/25
- MSEB Corporate Performance Suite 2025/26
- MSEB Priorities & Projects 2025/26
- Annual Review of Local Government Complaints 2024-25
- Regulator for Social Housing – Provider Improvement Plan

7 APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Quarter 1 Corporate Performance Compendium
- Appendix B – Q1 Complaint Handling
- Appendix C - Local Government Outcomes Framework – Overview
- Appendix D – Risk Management Policy 2025

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Corporate Performance Report 2025/26
Quarter 1 (April, May, June)



Key to Performance Status Symbols

- Red - Focus of Improvement
- Amber - Initial Improvement Activity Identified
- Green - Achieving Target
- Pink - Baseline Measure

Key to Milestone Status Symbols

- Red triangle - Severe delays
- Orange circle - Some delays
- Green star - On track
- Green star with checkmark - Completed

MORE SOCIAL, AFFORDABLE & GOOD QUALITY HOMES 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Comments
Page 145 % of customers satisfied with how their complaint was handled at stage two (Housing)	0.00%	0.00%	27.00%	0.00%		40.00%	40.00%	30/06/2025 As part of the rollout of the Councils new Complaints Handling System the approach to transactional surveys has changed. The council has implemented a new, fully automated process through the GovMetric platform, but surveys will recommence from July onwards, so there are no transactional surveys available for Q1. The Councils Housing Service is still collating data on complaint satisfaction through our Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Compared with our initial 2023/24 results, our 2024/25 figures are significantly improved in this regard. This measure serves to augment that dataset and provide further insight from residents.
% of Damp and Mould cases completed on time	64.00%	73.06%	79.00%	80.13%	85.00%	85.00%	85.00%	30/06/2025 Q1 reporting uses the current case completion KPI, with a refreshed set to be introduced for Q2 to align with Awaab's Law. Performance met target at 85 percent; by quarter end there were 15 work orders outstanding, 11 of which were overdue beyond target. A performance clinic on Damp, Mould and Disrepair was held to review case progression and agree priorities. An action plan has been created to work through ongoing challenges and realise improvements ahead of a follow up session is scheduled later in Q2 to review progress. The revised measures will be included as part of the Q2 Corporate Performance Suite providing clearer monitoring of performance against new legislation through the remainder of the year.

	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Comments
% of Damp and Mould inspections completed on time	72.00%	82.22%	85.69%	72.95%	89.00%	85.00%	85.00%	30/06/2025 For Q1 the council is reporting against the current indicator while a refreshed KPI set is prepared for Q2 to reflect legislative changes arising from Awaab's Law. Performance this quarter remained above target in a period where the number of inspections raised increased compared with last quarter, with completions holding broadly steady. At quarter end there were 4 inspections outstanding, 3 of which were overdue, and 2 of these related to access. A performance clinic on Damp, Mould and Disrepair was held this quarter to set priorities and actions. These focused on improving first appointment reliability, strengthening access arrangements and shortening rebooking cycles. The outcomes and actions from the performance clinic will feed into the revised measures as part of Q2 Corporate Performance Reporting.
% of tenants satisfied with how their complaint was handled at stage one (Housing)	36.00%	47.00%	55.00%	0.00%		40.00%	40.00%	30/06/2025 As part of the rollout of the Councils new Complaints Handling System the approach to transactional surveys has changed. The council has implemented a new, fully automated process through the GovMetric platform, but surveys will recommence from July onwards, so there are no transactional surveys available for Q1. The Councils Housing Service is still collating data on complaint satisfaction through our Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Compared with our initial 2023/24 results, our 2024/25 figures are significantly improved in this regard. This measure serves to augment that dataset and provide further insight from residents.
Average time taken to relet a routine void (GN). key to key	100.00	89.00	85.00	63.00	54.00	50.00	40.00	30/06/2025 The target for Q1 has been met and improvements on previous quarters. 43 standard voids were relet in Q1. There have been a number of properties in extremely poor condition returned at termination during Q1 contributing to a longer works time for clearances and environmental cleans. The use of interim void contractors is ongoing whilst the Council are in the process of procuring a long term voids contract which should improve the works stage turnaround time. Q1 also included the letting of some void properties that required adaptations prior to letting resulting in a higher overall turnaround time. A new process has been agreed between the Aids and Adaptations and Voids teams to minimise such delays in the future.
HDD1d: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014)	497.00	497.00	498.00	500.00	501.00	501.00	528.00	

	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Comments
Homelessness preventions	37.00	58.00	82.00	117.00	47.00	30.00	60.00	30/06/2025 Housing Options Assistants have played a key role in triaging homelessness approaches and ensuring targeted and timely interventions. The sustained high volume of presentations illustrates persistent housing pressures, but the service has responded with resilience and a continued push on the focus of early intervention to exceed the target for Q1.
Rep4: Percentage of repairs & inspections completed first time	96.79%	97.19%	95.83%	93.07%	84.86%	90.00%	90.00%	30/06/2025 Following analysis of the dataset, the measure has been renamed to better reflect the way activity is currently captured. Data sources and definitions are being refined ahead of the Q2 Corporate Performance Report to introduce a clearer and more robust set of measures. Repairs has been identified as a challenging service area and improvements plans are in place. A new management team has been appointed, support contractors have been procured, policies updated, and processes reviewed to improve the customer experience and the efficiency of the service which should feed through in terms of KPI data. The TSM's are showing an upward trajectory in customer satisfaction with repairs and driving further improvement is a key focus of the service plans for this year. There are various reasons why jobs can't be completed first time including unavailability of materials, second or different trade required. Wherever possible jobs are completed alongside an inspection subject to these types of issues not preventing this from being the case. Further investigation into reasons for the KPI target not being met will be undertaken alongside monitoring of performance trends to understand whether planned improvements are having a positive impact on direction of travel and/or if other corrective actions can and should be taken to bring performance back in line with the target.
RP01a: Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum DH standard	95.40%	95.97%	92.22%	96.64%	96.42%	98.50%	98.50%	30/06/2025 The team are slightly below target with our decency figures for Quarter 1; as the decent homes programmes are still within the mobilisation stage of the programme. As the decent homes programmes are now underway, it is expected that this will help to further improve the non-decent stock target figure and help to meet the target set for Q2.
RSH BS01: Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas certificate	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
RSH BS02: Percentage of dwellings with a valid Fire Risk Assessment	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
RSH BS03: Percentage of properties that require an annual asbestos inspection / survey	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	

	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Comments
RSH BS04: Percentage of sites with valid legionella inspections certificate	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
RSH BS05: Percentage of domestic passenger lifts with an in date LOLER inspection	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
RSH CH01 (part 2): Number of stage two complaints made by tenants	21	36	57	85	34			
RSH CH01 (part1): Number of stage one complaints made by tenants	214	357	516	688	134			
RSH CH02 (part1): Number of stage 1 complaints made by tenants and responded to within CH Timescale	199	337	493	651	125			30/06/2025 During the first quarter 134 complaints involving Housing Services were recorded/received - these were not exclusively by 'tenants' Of those 134: 125 were responded to within time 1 was responded to out of time 8 remained active at the end of the period but were still within target time The reason some cases will be open and active at the end of a quarter depends on when they were received. If a complaint is received on 30 June then the target date for response would not be until 10 working days, that being in July.
RSH CH02 (part2): Number of stage 2 complaints made by tenants and responded to within CH Timescale	19	30	51	69	28			30/06/2025 During the first quarter 34 stage 2 complaints were recorded/received. This is all complaints received for Housing Services, not exclusively 'tenants' Of those 34: 28 were closed within time 1 was closed out of target time 5 remained active at the end of the period but were still within target time The reason some cases will be open and active at the end of a quarter depends on when they were received. If a complaint is received on 30 June then the target date for response would not be until 20 working days later, that being in July
RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial High Risk Actions		0	0	0	0			
RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Low Risk Actions		312	215	122	0			
RSH Number of Overdue Fire Remedial Medium Risk Actions		286	159	81	0			
RSH Number of Overdue Water Remedial Actions			71	59	27			

	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Comments
RSH Rep1: Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within target timescale	99.00%	99.29%	99.08%	98.45%	98.30%	99.00%	99.00%	
RSH Rep2: Proportion of non-emergency (Routine and Urgent) responsive repairs completed within target	91.00%	88.90%	77.17%	91.45%	94.88%	95.00%	95.00%	30/06/2025 Urgent jobs improved by 3.39% , reaching 95.61% in June Routine jobs rose by 5.3% , reaching 95.84% . Combined, this results in a strong Q1 performance figure of 94.88% .
VED1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid EICR Electrical Certificate	99.58%	99.14%	98.41%	99.61%	98.33%	100.00%	100.00%	

MORE SOCIAL, AFFORDABLE & GOOD QUALITY HOMES 2025/26 MILESTONES

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
Building New & Sustainable Homes Page 149	 Bragbury End	* Planning permission and sale of 500 unit scheme at Bragbury End. * Public consultation * Planning permission submitted * Planning decision * Sales agent appointed		30 Jun 2025 Project is on track, public consultation is due to take place in mid-July, with submission to Planning due to take place by the end of July.
	 Brent Court - Independent Living	* Delivery of 96 unit Independent Living scheme on site of former Brent Court Garages. * Gateway 2 submission made * Gateway 2 permission * Demolition of Garages * Foundation work completed		30 Jun 2025 Additional drainage and car parking work due to begin in August, with submission to Gateway 2 scheduled for early September.
	 Burwell Phase Two	* Topping out of 20 homes for affordable rent.		30 Jun 2025 Foundation works have been completed at the site, and brick and blockwork is underway. Opportunity to bring in Homes England funding currently being explored.
	 Cartref	* Delivery of land receipt and affordable homes.		30 Jun 2025 Exchange scheduled for end of the month, with works to begin on site by the end of the year.

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 Courtlands	* Completion of 17 unit private sale scheme.		30 Jun 2025 First five homes due to handover next month, with a number of sales visits currently taking place. Not due for completion until Q4 2025/26.
	 Defects	* Ongoing delivery of defects provision		30 Jun 2025 End of defects work has taken place at Kenilworth Close with the vast majority of residents at Brodie Court having provided access for visits.
	 Ellis Avenue	* Delivery of 11 homes for Council Rent. * Demolition Completed		30 Jun 2025 Submissions are being made to Planning to discharge the pre-commencement conditions to enable demolition to take place.
	 Garage Sites Sales	* Cabinet approval for disposal of sites * Appoint architect for scheme development * Initial Design approval		30 Jun 2025 Cabinet approval has been granted to progress the programme, and design work underway for two garage sites.
	 Kenilworth Phase Two	* Delivery of 24 home Private sale scheme, building on the completion of Phase One of the Kenilworth site. * Demolition of Walpole Court Completed * Foundation work completed * Estate Agent appointed		30 Jun 2025 Demolition of Walpole completed. Pre-commencement conditions have been submitted to Planning for discharge, and a stopping up order has been applied for to remove footpaths within the development from the highways network. Work to appoint an Estate Agent have completed.
	 Locality Review	* Provision of strategy to meet Locality Review Requirements and design development of initial sites.		30 Jun 2025 Architect has been appointed to begin design development for initial schemes.

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 The Oval	* Delivery of mixed used phase neighbourhood regeneration. * Contractor appointed * Demolition for phase 1 completed * Start on Site		30 Jun 2025 Contractor has been appointed for the first phase, with start on site forecast for October 2025. Additional grant funding has been achieved, with an extra £11.2m granted for the delivery of affordable housing at the scheme.
Maintaining Good Quality Homes	 Building & Fire Safety Compliance	* Delivery of the Building Safety Action Plan		30 Jun 2025 Work continues on all the high rise high risk buildings within SBC to carry out the improvement works.
	 Decarbonisation (Wave 3.1)	* Procurement of works for a multi year programme linked to a 3 year funding allocation received from Warm Homes - Social Housing Fund * Start delivery of programme once procurement of a contractor has taken place.		30 Jun 2025 We are on track for contract award approval at September cabinet. Tender returns are due on 11th July.
	 Housing Asset Review	* Procure consultant support * Produce and provide performance data for input into the model * Staff workshops for perception measures * Data analysis and report * Agree recommendations and produce action plan * Report to EHWG on findings and recommendations		30 Jun 2025 Consultant has been appointed Staff workshop have been held and outcomes incorporated in the modelling. We are on track with the remaining milestones and reporting through to EHWG on the outcomes.
	 MRC Refurbishment	* Delivery of the final year of MRC - a refurbishment programme to the council's flat blocks (excluding high rises).		30 Jun 2025 We are on track for completion of the MRC programme in 2025/26. All works to complete the project have now been issued.

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
	New Legislation and policy	* Awaabs Law - Alongside changes to HHSRS Legislation will have a phased implementation from October 2025 (damp and mould) and extended to other hazards during 2026 and 2027. * Consultation on a new Decent Homes standard and implications for Stevenage		30 Jun 2025 Guidance for the implementation of Awaab's law in October 2025 has now been released and is currently being reviewed against the current policy and procedures. Consultation on a new Decent Homes Standard and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard have been released. The team are currently reviewing the documentation and drafting a proposed response by the September deadline
	 Provider Improvement Plan & Journey to C1	* Delivery of the actions outlined in the Regulator for Social Housing Provider Improvement Plan following inspection in September 2024.		30 Jun 2025 Meeting with Regulator on a quarterly basis and provide updates in advance. The regulator is assured by the progress being made.
	 Repairs (inc Disrepair and D & M) Service Improvement Plan	* Completion of all team process workshops and development of action plans * Easily accessible processes in place for all teams * Implementation of all action plans * Stakeholder mapping/touch points		30 Jun 2025 The first significant milestone — holding process workshops across all areas — has been successfully achieved. Action plans are now being finalised to realise the next major milestone: fully documenting and process-mapping all procedures. This progress is further supported by recruitment efforts, with only three advertised roles remaining vacant.
	 Resident Engagement & Scrutiny	* Delivery of the Resident Engagement Strategy and Framework. * Operating tenant panel and scrutiny panel in place		30 Jun 2025 Resident engagement Manager will be in post at the end of July with priority to implement Tenant Panel and Scrutiny arrangements. Engagement activity taking place across all housing services.

		Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 Service Review Temporary Accommodation	* Review the service delivery of the Temporary Accommodation Service.		30 Jun 2025 Work is commencing on an action plan for improvements, with this planned to be presented at Executive Housing Working Group.

TRANSFORMING OUR TOWN 2025/26 PERFORMANCE								
	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target Quarter 2 2025/26 ytd	Comments
NI157a: Percentage of major planning applications determined in thirteen	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	60.0%	60.0%	
Ni157b: Percentage of minor planning applications determined in eight weeks	100.0%	97.1%	98.5%	98.8%	100.0%	70.0%	70.0%	
NI157c:Percentage of other planning applications determined in eight weeks	98.2%	96.1%	97.1%	97.8%	100.0%	70.0%	70.0%	

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Enterprise & Skills	 Apprentice Programme	* Begin the delivery of new Apprenticeship & Leadership Development programmes, aligned with the new Workforce Strategy.		30 Jun 2025 HR invited managers to express their interest in hosting a corporate apprentice post, in six new corporate apprenticeships, with the roles confirmed in June. The positions are as follows: 1. Finance Apprentice - degree level 2. Building Surveyor (Estates) - degree level 3. Surveyor (Housing Asset Management) - degree level 4. Culture, Leisure, and Wellbeing - level 3 5. Regulatory Compliance Apprentice (Env Health and Licensing) - level 4 6. Arborist Apprentice - level 3 7. 8. Additionally, two further apprentice roles have been advertised and funded by Business Units: a second Arborist Apprenticeship and a Health and Safety Apprenticeship. The advertisement went live in July 2025, with assessment and appointment expected to be complete by the end of Q2.
	 Business Technology Centre Contract Renewal	* Explore options for Business Technology Centre Contract Renewal.		30 Jun 2025 A report to commence procurement of BTC contract renewal was presented to SLT, with detailed assessment of the overall performance, delivery, challenges undertaken and also highlighting the launch of soft market testing. PPME was subsequently launched 17 July. Returns to arrive noon 15 Aug

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 Pioneering Young STEM Futures - P2	* Secure Phase Two of the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme with funding from M44. Begin delivery of Year One.		30 Jun 2025 Funding for a 5 year, £1.1m Phase Two extension of the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme was approved by SBC Cabinet and Mission 44 Board in Q1. Phase Two expands the breadth and the depth of existing interventions and includes a new peer-to-peer mentoring scheme, a partnership with Airbus Space & Defence and the creation of a Youth Innovation Fund. The council continues to work closely with its key strategic partners: The University of Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire College & Hertfordshire Futures in order to drive this work forward. Delivery of interventions will begin from the start of the school term in September 2025.
	 Stevenage Works - Health & Social Care Expansion	* Establishment of supporting Governance Framework. * Establishment of a pilot cohort of care providers alongside partners. * Review of initial pilot cohort of care providers.		30 Jun 2025 Following the approval of the Terms of Reference at the SW Board meeting in June 2025, subsequent meetings have taken place between North Herts College, Job Centre Plus and other potential partners within the Care Industry. An event will take place in August 2025 at the JCP to share insights into the industry to its customers, aimed at dispelling any myths associated with it, and to encourage participation in further training opportunities. A 'soft launch' will take place in the form of an inaugural course at NHC in September 2025, following which a review will take place to determine next steps .
	 Stevenage Works - Social Value & Procurement	* Continue to leverage social value on contracts through Stevenage Works and deliver a similar approach across the organisation. * Create and publish the Stevenage Works impact Report. * Manage and deliver the Stevenage Works Community Chest Fund		30 Jun 2025 Regular meetings continue between Stevenage Works and contractors working in the area, to track Social Value delivered against commitments made. This includes offering support and signposting where required. As Social Value has been written in to contracts made with 6 Decent Homes companies, these have been added, with 2 yet to start.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Regeneration Page 156	 UK Shared Prosperity Fund	* Deliver the 2025/26 extension of UKSPF. Establish plans for 2026/27 UKSPF replacement.		30 Jun 2025 UKSPF has been extended through 2025/26 with an additional £327k in funding being awarded to SBC. This funding has been received from Government in Q1, and delivery has begun. The next milestone is the mid-year reporting window to MHCLG, which will be completed by the end of Q2. However, following the Governments Spending Review in June 2025, it was announced that no further tranches of UKSPF will be allocated. The scheme will be replaced by a new Local Growth Funding pot, with details around allocations and criteria still to be announced.
	 Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity - Arts & Heritage Trail	* Design and implementation of an Arts & Heritage Trail.		30 Jun 2025 The workplan for the new Arts & Heritage Trail remains on track. Final designs and proposed locations have been developed by Made by Landmark and the team are working through the interpretation data, with support from the Museum colleagues.
	 Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity - Underpass Improvements	* Improvement works and installation of artwork on nine underpasses within the Arts & Heritage Trail.		30 Jun 2025 The Martins Way/Hitchin Road underpasses have been completed, 950 entries were received from schools in the town, with over 200 being utilised in the design. An event was held where all the school competition winners were invited to see the unveiling of their artwork. 5 out of the 7 upcoming underpasses have had their designs approved by HCC - we are working with independent artists and supporting them with this work. We envisage this cohort to be complete within Q2.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 Gunnelswood Road Infrastructure	* Introduction of new infrastructure to a key roundabout to support the GSK development.		30 Jun 2025 Developer Reef Origin continue to work through their masterplan design for the site as a whole and are anticipating the main works to begin mid-2026. In relation to the new infrastructure, in the past six weeks works have commenced for the primary sub-station work which are due to complete at the end of 2026.
	 Local Plan Review & Partial Update	* Partial update and review of the council's Local Plan.		30 Jun 2025 In progress. Submission of Local Plan Partial Update and revised CIL August 2025. Examination in Public end 2025.
	 Regeneration Comms & Marketing	* Regeneration communications and marketing strategy agreed for 25/26, including engagement and consultation.		30 Jun 2025 Communications and Marketing for the programme has been delivered consistently throughout Q1, with the exception of during the pre-election periods for the May Hertfordshire County Council elections and June Bedwell by-election. Activity throughout the period has included a social media focus around arts and culture, with the announcement of the next set of underpass artworks and further information on Stevenage Heart Trails. Elsewhere, Stevenage Station Gateway was announced alongside attendance at industry focused events. Towards the end of the quarter, upgraded Beryl Bikes began a phased return to the town and this was communicated widely. Work with schools around the opportunities that regeneration presents to the younger generation is ongoing. The strategy for 2025/26 has been drafted and agreed.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 SG1 - Plot A	* Phase 1A of the SG1 Programme - previous Swingate House site. * Completion of early works and drawdown of site * Design and procurement complete (SG1 Plot A)		30 Jun 2025 The ground floor slab work is complete, the superstructure has progressed up to level 3 within this reporting period and the virgin media diversion works have been completed. Contractor Gilbert Ash continue to distribute newsletters to surrounding residents and businesses with no negative correspondence or feedback received. Gilbert Ash are working with NHC to discuss student opportunities.
	 SG1 - Public Sector Hub	* Partner engagement and design of a civic hub offering a one stop location for public services in the heart of the town centre, including the new Museum		30 Jun 2025 Throughout Q1, the council has continued to explore potential opportunities for external funding to support the development of the Hub. Partner engagement has continued from last year, whilst exploring innovative design pathways.
	 Sports & Leisure Centre	* Finalisation of design, submission and approval of planning permission and construction to start on site.		30 Jun 2025 Throughout Q1, Stage 3 design work was completed with Stage 4 commencing and detailed design team meetings continuing with the project team. The planning application was successfully submitted; the Planning and Development Committee are due to hear the submission in September 2025.
	 Station Gateway	* Activating the Station Gateway area by working with a developer to create a viable scheme. * Initial masterplan complete * Cabinet decision to enter into a Development Agreement * Enter into Development Agreement		30 Jun 2025 Draft documentation is being developed to form the Development Agreement, which is programmed to go to Cabinet in the Autumn.

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Comments
CD1 Number of people engaged in Cooperative Neighbourhood 'Community & Place' initiatives	0	241	478	954	1,103	500	1,000	30/06/2025 Numbers collated from SBC resident survey. Field work undertaken during Q1, with initial results shared by end of Q1. Wider analysis and feedback to officers and members due to take place in Q2.
RSH NM01(part1): ASB cases opened by or on behalf of the provider during the reporting year	21	37	64	107	44			30/06/2025 Of the 53 ASB cases we have opened this quarter 44 of them involved an SBC tenant.
RSH NM01(part2) ASB cases that involve hate incidents opened by or on behalf of the provider during	0	1	3	4	1			30/06/2025 In this quarter we have had 1 reported case that involves Hate Related incident, this is still being investigated and is an ongoing case.
# of neighbourhood improvements, events, projects activities using UKSPF funding	18	36	54	138	0	0	10	30/06/2025 Funding was received at the start of June. Spending was halted due to bi-election. Team will begin to deliver projects over the coming months, following on from the C&N strategic board meeting. Reporting for UKSPF is done bi-annually, as such there is no target for Q1 and Q3.
% of Graffiti Clearances completed	18.00%	71.00%	81.82%	93.75%	100.00%	80.00%	80.00%	30/06/2025 Proactive approach to graffiti removal, and dedicated service, has had a really positive result for removal numbers and volume of graffiti present.
CD2: Value (£) invested into Neighbourhood areas from UKSPF	85,236.00	129,005.00	142,423.64	266,365.57	0.00	0.00	13,000.00	30/06/2025 There is a smaller neighbourhood allocation than the previous UKSPF tranche. This is due to a reduction in the council's total allocation. The next Co-operative Neighbourhoods Strategic Board meeting on the 30th July, where members will work collaboratively to determine local priorities based off of engagement data and insight collated last year. Reporting to MHCLG is undertaken bi-annually and as such we would expect to hit the Q2 reporting target.
Contamination rate of recycling - calculated as estimated proportion that is rejected of total amount		1.34	1.62	1.38	1.09	2.00	2.00	30/06/2025 The contamination was largely associated with food waste contamination within plastics /cans/tins. The team will be promoting the recycling right campaign and will remind residents about rinsing out their containers before placing in the recycling bin.

	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Comments
ES1: Percentage of residential bins collected	99.64%	99.67%	99.67%	99.73%	99.70%	99.00%	99.00%	30/06/2025 Missed bins are continuing to drop as we push and monitor team performance and educate staff.
NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs)	126.70	248.60	372.86	494.96		130.00	245.00	30/06/2025 This is a cumulative figure across 2024/25. This level of residual waste has been maintained for the past three years.
NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	42.20%	40.30%	35.60%	32.00%		40.00%	40.00%	30/06/2025 Q3 and Q4 are historically the lowest periods for recycling largely due to the lack of green waste being collected. This figure is 3% lower than the same period in 2023/24, but with the roll-out of separate weekly food waste collections in 2026 it is anticipated that the recycling rate for Stevenage will improve.
CWLS1: EvAc - No of under 16 using facilities and outreach prog at least once p/w	26,117	19,833	17,468	19,715	26,395	26,000	19,500	30/06/2025 Pool 14280 SALC - Leisure 3768 Ridlins 3660 Golf 1902 GCT 2785 Community Classes0

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS 2025/26 MILESTONES				
MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	 CCIN Policy Lab	* Two-year, £13,000 initiative led by Stevenage and Brent Councils, partnering with five other authorities, to strengthen community leadership and innovate local service delivery through cooperative, place-based approaches		30 Jun 2025 Prep work has begun, working with partner councils on the bid and getting it approved by the CCIN values and principles board which was approved at the end of June
	 Play Area Improvements	* Deliver capital programme of improvements to remaining sites and an options report to support future funding.		30 Jun 2025 Consultation on works delayed by elections / by-elections, but works now planned for autumn 2025
	 Social Inclusion Partnership Formalisation	* Work with the Social Inclusion Partnership, made up of our key voluntary sector partners to formalise as a multi-stakeholder cooperative.		30 Jun 2025 Agreement from all partner agencies to formalise as a multi-stakeholder co-operative, Stevenage CAN. Legalities are being progressed.

MSEB Sub Priority					
Community Safety TN	Page 161		ASB Services Delivery Review		

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Culture & Leisure TN	 SADA Safe Accomodation	* Obtain properties to use as dispersed accommodation for family dynamics that would not fit refuge provisions.		30 Jun 2025 Q1: SADA continues to offer safe accommodation as an alternative to traditional refuge provision, with 2 new properties acquired and 15 families or single clients accommodated in SADA safe spaces.
	 Active Communities	* Everyone Active's AC programme brings physical activity to community venues such as community centres , pavilions and schools.		30 Jun 2025 9 different types of classes are currently being provided within the community including Yoga, Zumba and strength and mobility sessions and many more Everyone Active attended 5 community events in the first quarter including the Walking Festival & Stevenage Day Stevenage Golf Centre junior usage has significantly increased aided by Sharpshooters Academy currently with 65 members, in addition there were projects in Lonsdale, Valley and Greenside schools, a primary and secondary school open day and junior gold competition in partnership with Sporting Futures Home Education sessions SEN session provided every Monday & Wednesday for all ages Stevenage Swimming Centre Offered every school in Stevenage 10 free place for year six students who had not achieved the required swimming standards
	 Arts & Culture Programme	* An ambitious programme of activity		30 Jun 2025 Work is continuing on the bus station sculpture and planning permission has been secured. Work is being undertaken to create an updated heritage trail called Stevenage Arts Trails to explore the wide array of art and heritage across Stevenage. New Arts Commission The regeneration team are in the process of collating procurement documents for four new art pieces

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	 PlayZone Programme	* Create an inclusive and accessible 3G pitch within King George V Playing Fields. As part of the PlayZone initiative, led by the Football Foundation, aims to create an inclusive, and accessible outdoor 3G pitch within KGV Playing Fields.		30 Jun 2025 final agreement from the Football Foundation/ FA (FF) that they agreed the award that 75% funding would be provided for this facility (25% match funded from Section 106) we had an on-site kick off meeting in August with the FF and the building contractor and they are currently working on a Planning Submission with the intention of completing on site in early 2026.

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/25 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Comments
CC1: Percentage of homes that have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of Band C or above	62.33%	64.43%	65.89%	66.46%	67.82%	66.46%	67.00%	30/06/2025 % of homes that have an EPC rating of C or above – 66% Number of dwellings EPC C rating or above – 5301

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Tackling Climate Change	☒ Climate Action Street Plans	* Develop street plans led by Councillors, with the support of officers to deliver community projects		30 Jun 2025 The project has started to be defined, and meetings have been organised with key officers from various departments to begin shaping the details. Additionally, preliminary priority sites have been identified where these Street Plans could potentially be developed.
	☒ Climate Change Community Fund	* Assess, support and advise on community-led climate projects, review alternative schemes of delivery.		30 Jun 2025 The delivery of Climate Change Community Fund projects across the town is ongoing, along with the assessment of potential new projects to be submitted to the Climate Change Progress Group for approval. At the same time, a review of delivery rates from previous years is being carried out to identify administrative improvements that could help increase delivery levels in the current financial year.
	☒ Low Carbon Skills Funding Application	* Submit an application for Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF) grant aligned with the Council's climate targets. This will assist with decarbonisation projects such as retrofitting public buildings.		30 Jun 2025 The UK Government has announced that no funding will be available this year for the Low Carbon Skills Fund, which means this project will not be delivered. However, the Council is exploring alternative options to continue advancing the understanding of our decarbonisation needs in buildings.
	☒ Simpler Recycling (including Flat Block Pilot)	* Review of kerbside collections in accordance with new government legislation and deliver programme of change. Deliver schemes to improve recycling rates at flat blocks.		30 Jun 2025 The project is moving forwards. Flat block survey for non recycling provision has been completed and work identified. Cabinet have approved use of EPR money to fund structural works required.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	☒ Sustainability Business Support	* Deliver workshops, mentoring, coaching and supply chain support activities for Stevenage businesses across three projects: 1. Green Business Start Up Scheme. 2. Sustainable X Business Support Programme 3. Action Zero Programme (Wenta)		30 Jun 2025 1.SBC awarded 7 businesses and 1 charity with the Green Business Grant. Businesses are continuing to draw down funds. 2. Sustainable X and Economic Development have been focusing on the next phase of the programme and have launched 121 support for businesses, as part of wider contract readiness and business competitiveness support under the Sustainable Business Support Programme. 3. Wenta has supported 147 businesses with the Gold Action Zero programme, with businesses from the following areas receiving wider Sustainability support: retail, food and drink, consumer services, health & wellbeing, entertainment hair & beauty
	☒ Tree Planting	*Micro Woods - Deliver new micro woods. * Canopy Cover - Plant new trees to support increasing tree canopy cover in areas of the town with deficiency.		30 Jun 2025 The 2025/26 completion date had been at risk and a delay was anticipated due to resourcing constraints. However, additional funding has been identified which could restore the original timetable, subject to confirming scope and delivery implications. Work is under way to determine how this support can be applied, including the number of micro-woods and programme sequencing.
	☒ Warm Homes Local Grant Scheme	* Identify and support eligible households to improve energy efficiency, combat fuel poverty and reduce energy costs. Coordinate delivery of the Solar Together scheme in Stevenage.		30 Jun 2025 The Solar Together Scheme is now closed. Regarding the Warm Homes Local Grant, the Council has now partnered with the National Energy Foundation (NEF) for its delivery. Additionally, the Council is in the final stages of addressing certain conditions and restrictions as part of the Delivery Assurance Check (DAC) with DESNZ, after which delivery is expected to begin in the coming weeks.

BALANCING THE BUDGET 2025/26 PERFORMANCE

	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Comments
% of Corporate Building Overall Completed Remedials	84.00%	82.50%	76.54%	75.15%	85.85%	80.00%	80.00%	30/06/2025 Corporate Compliance is 100% in date for assessments. The Facilities Team has continued to make steady progress in addressing compliance remedial actions, reaching a reported completion rate of 85.85% as of June 2025. A total of 3,878 out of 4,518 actions have been completed or marked as not required, leaving 640 remedials outstanding representing 14.15% of the total. This reflects an improvement of 10.70% since March. Many outstanding items are physical works. Fire Risk Assessment Policy & Procedure remedials will be the next key focus area, comprising a substantial portion of the remaining actions across multiple categories. The team continues to work closely with service providers to resolve high priority items and anticipates surpassing the 80% completion milestone in the near future. These efforts underline the team's commitment to maintaining high compliance standards across its estate.
% of Corporate Building Overall Compliance Inspections completed	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
BV10: Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority	38.65%	63.11%	90.00%	99.21%	37.05%	36.00%	60.00%	
BV66a: Rent collection rate	89.44%	97.00%	98.60%	98.13%	93.28%	88.50%	95.00%	30/06/2025 Income collection for Q1 of the 2025/26 financial year stands at 93.28%, exceeding the target of 92.40%. This figure includes arrears carried forward from the previous year and reflects a strong start to this financial year and a continued focus on early intervention and tenant engagement. Compared to Q1 of 2024, when income collection was 89.44%, this represents a notable improvement year on year of 3.84%. Excluding brought-forward arrears, the underlying collection performance is 100.04%.
BV9: Percentage of council tax collected	32.90%	59.10%	85.50%	94.50%	32.09%	33.00%	60.00%	30/06/2025 Performance for Q1 is slightly below the 33% target at 32.09%. However, this is a similar position to last financial year, which was also narrowly below target. Tolerances for financial measures are tightly controlled in order to give early warning of potential challenges. The Revenue team continues to pursue all outstanding debt, utilising all available tools. Where possible, they are also encouraging residents to apply for benefits when appropriate.

	Actual - Quarter 1 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2025/26 YTD	Target - Quarter 2 2025/26 YTD	Comments
CNM2g: Garage Voids (residential) as a percentage of stock	6.99%	7.50%	8.04%	7.76%	7.87%	7.26%	7.26%	30/06/2025 The residential garage void rate for Q1 is 7.87% against a target of 7.51%. There were 135 terminations in quarter 1 compared to 99 in quarter 4, an increase of 35%. The main reasons for terminating the garage was the cost of the garage and the cost of living. There was a 20% decrease in offers in quarter 1, with bidders still coming through with debt on their accounts. However, there was a 7% increase in acceptances in quarter 1 to 82%, and in the second week of June the acceptance rate was 100%. During quarter 1 there has been a focus on marketing and refining processes in digital lettings. The "available from date" has been removed from customer view to help with letting out some of the older voids that have been on the platform. To stimulate demand, some of the surplus voids, in the 3 harder to let garage blocks, have been reduced within the platform. Promotion of Garages to let now features permanently on the carousel on the home page of the Council's website. Approval for a new "refer a friend" scheme was approved at the June meeting of the Commercial and Investment Working Group and will be rolled out during quarter 2 specifically on the 3 hard to let garage blocks. The service are now capturing and analysing information on how customers hear about the service to help identify the most effective advertising channels that are being used.
Comp CR1: % of council service customer complaints responded to within deadline	82.20%	87.00%	90.00%	77.40%	85.00%	80.00%	80.00%	30/06/2025 Performance based on received complaints in April/May and June. Does not include complaints that are not resolved but still in target. 102 Stage 1 complaints during Q1 18 Stage 2 complaints during Q1 85% were answered within deadline 11.6% were late 3.4% remain unresolved within target (response if due within Q2)
CR1: % of commercial rent collected from estates	91%	91%	91%	91%	90%	90%	90%	
CSC Sat: Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service	92.80%	92.10%	93.10%	88.80%	93.00%	80.00%	80.00%	30/06/2025 Customer satisfaction remains strong at 92.9% of customers leaving a score of 'good' when they leave feedback. Feedback continues to highlight the helpfulness and kindness of advisers.
Dig2: Number of online payments	29,182	59,095	88,823	117,255	31,748	31,500	63,000	30/06/2025 Payments through the Council's website increased by 9% compared to the same time last year. This strong performance was slightly more than forecast.
Garage/Commercial/Parking- income raised vs budget for the top 3 income streams of the General Fund	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	30/06/2025 Projection is that 100% budgeted income will be achieved.
NI181: Time taken (days) to process housing benefit new claims and change events	7.70	7.82	5.39	2.01	5.89	12.00	12.00	

BALANCING THE BUDGET 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Balancing the Budget	☒ Business Change & Transformation	* Community Advice & Support - Service Improvements to embed the activity-led Community Advice and Support (CA&S) team. * Localities - Service improvements for Business Units working in the local community. * Revenues & Benefits - Deliver service improvements and efficiencies jointly with East Herts.		30 Jun 2025 On track to deliver this year: Community Advice & Support - after initial changes in 2023 further improvements are being implemented by the Head of Service (this part of the milestone is now complete) Localities - improvements have been made to within two business units (SDS and H&N), and changes to roles have been implemented to provide better and more sustainable services for residents. Analysis of benefits is ongoing and due to be completed in Q2. Revenues and Benefits - improvements to online services for customers, and the associated back-office processes, are being implemented with an initial focus on online services and quicker responses with initial solutioned expected to go live end of Q2. Analysis is underway to identify further improvements.
	☒ Commercial Culture Development	* Operating the Council in more of a business-like way by equipping staff with the right skills and engendering commercial behaviour.		30 Jun 2025 Proposals were brought to the June Commercial and Investment Working Group from across the Council, including from the town centres and estates teams, garages, parking and trade waste, highlighting a broad commercial culture. In quarter 1 the Council registered as a supplier on the UK Governments' Central Digital Platform (CDP) which will allow SBC services to bid for large public sector contracts and the cemeteries brochure was launched.
	☒ Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	* Adopt a CIL spending protocol to bring together commitments made and provide a structure around future spending decisions.		30 Jun 2025 In progress. Early scoping paper July 2025. Aim to go to Cabinet 2025/26.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
	☒ Fees & Charges	* Review of fees and charges		30 Jun 2025 As per the fees and charges schedule for 2026/27, initial workshops were held with services in June, covering all chargeable services within both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. Services are now working on their proposals, with commercial team support, ahead of proposals being reviewed at the Council's Financial Security Group (CFSG) and then Cabinet in October.
	☒ General Fund & HRA Savings 2025/26	* Approve balanced budgets for 2026/26 for HRA in January 2026 and GF in February 2026.		30 Jun 2025 At the start of the 2025/26 financial year, both the General Fund and HRA budgets were set after taking into account various Balancing the Budget options. Quarterly monitoring is actively underway to ensure financial performance remains aligned with the approved plans. In parallel, early work has commenced on the 2026/27 budget setting process, including the initiation of Star Chamber sessions to identify savings opportunities and a comprehensive review of the HRA Business Plan along with the Central Government fair funding review implications.
	☒ HRA Business Plan	* Undertake a review of the HRA Business Plan to help ensure a sustainable picture for the HRA going forward.		30 Jun 2025 Early work has commenced on the 2026/27 budget setting process including the initiation of Star Chamber sessions to identify and review possible savings as well as growth pressures from regulatory requirements. The HRA business plan is currently being modelled.
	☒ Review Insourcing Options	* As per the Insourcing Roadmap 2023-26, review of all services provided to or on behalf of the council by external supplier or third party.		30 Jun 2025 As per contract end dates, there were no insourcing opportunities to review in quarter 1.

CROSS CUTTING 2025/26 MILESTONES

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	☒ EDI Action Plan, Annual Report & EDGG	* Deliver on the 18 actions highlighted as part of the EDI Action Plan, report these through EDGG and the councils Equalities Annual Report.		30 Jun 2025 Quarterly updates are collected on the EDI Action Plan, with the fourth quarter being requested in July ahead of the action plan's annual revision. All updates are also currently being compiled into an annual progress report to coincide with the revision of the action plan too.
	☒ Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group	* Support the development of the Stevenage Equalities Commission Legacy Group, including its formalisation as a Multi-stakeholder Cooperative.		30 Jun 2025 Information provided through the EDI Action Plan Quarter 4 update - The SEC Legacy Group will transition into an advisory role within Stevenage Race Equality Co-operative (SREC)'s governance, helping maintain a clear link between the Commission's findings and their implementation. SREC will be organised around thematic working groups that reflect the original Commission priorities (e.g., Health, Education, Representation), with membership drawn from VCFSE organisations, public bodies, and local communities.
Health & Wellbeing	☒ Age Friendly Communities	* Age-Friendly Communities is a collaborative programme with HCC and Age UK to deliver projects and events to support older residents in Stevenage.		30 Jun 2025 As part of our commitment to becoming an Age-Friendly Community, we are currently exploring the feasibility of introducing a 'Take a Seat' campaign within Stevenage town centre. This initiative aims to improve accessibility and comfort for older residents by increasing the availability of seating in key locations. We are also working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council and Age UK to gather valuable insight from local residents. The findings from this survey will help us identify key priorities and shape our Age-Friendly Community Action Plan. We look forward to sharing further updates once the results are available.

MSEB Sub Priority	Project	Milestones	Performance	Comments
Page 171	☒ Dementia Friendly Communities	* Dementia Friendly Communities is delivered in collaboration with local organisation to support those living with dementia in Stevenage.		30 Jun 2025 We successfully ran our 2 Herts Dementia Festival with Alzheimer's Society on 21 June 2025 with over 200 people attending our Fairlands Valley Park festival. The festival has performances from local groups and school to put on a family fun day for people living with dementia, their families, and carers. We are still very much involved with the new accreditation pilot project which was due to start in June but withs from the web designers it has now been pushed to launch in August. The pilot project will see organisations from Stevenage sign up for their dementia Friendly status to help Stevenage become more Dementia Friendly
	☒ Healthy Hub	* Funding received for a further two years of delivery through HCC Public Health.		30 Jun 2025 The Healthy Hub has continued to offer a range of health and wellbeing support and advice. The Hub is in the process of training staff to deliver Stop Smoking service through the Hub. They are continuing to deliver outreach within the community offering advice, wellbeing checks and onward referrals when required.
	☒ Healthy Stevenage Strategy Revision	* A revision of the councils current Health Stevenage Strategy delivered in cooperation with HCC Public Health and other partners.		30 Jun 2025 We have engaged with the Public Health Insight Team to produce a JSNA for Stevenage. This will form the basis of a new strategy and highlight potential priorities. Following this we will engage with Healthy Stevenage Partners for comments.
Technology & Innovation	☒ ICT Strategy & Assurance	* Cyber First: Ensuring security, data-driven decisions, and adaptability. * Data-driven Decision-Making: Utilising data for strategic planning. * Innovate, Adapt, and Empower: Encouraging innovation and continuous learning.		

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APPENDIX XX

The table below sets out details of decisions issued with Q1 by both the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsmen which relate to the Councils Housing Services. In all cases Orders or actions have been completed. No further action is required in respect of any of these cases and this item is for information only.

Complaint No	Council Process Ended	Ombudsmen Decision	Issue	Determination/Outcome	Order/Action	Ombudsmen
1	Dec 2024	16 April 2025	Housing Application	Investigation ended – Ombudsmen determined Council Stage 2 response was reasonable and proportionate outcome	- None From Ombudsmen - Stage 2 response provided for case review and compensation	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsmen
2	Aug 2023	30 March 2025	Leaseholder Repairs	No maladministration	None	Housing Ombudsmen
			Asset Management	Service Failure	Compensation £100	Housing Ombudsmen
			Complaint Handling	Service Failure	Compensation £100	Housing Ombudsmen
3	Jun 2024	15 May 2025	Repairs and Asset Management	Maladministration	- Written apology - Compensation £700 - Specific resolution actions to be completed	Housing Ombudsmen
			Complaint Handling	Service Failure	- Written apology - Compensation £250	Housing Ombudsmen
4	Oct 2024	25 June 2025	Estate Management	No maladministration	None	Housing Ombudsmen

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LGOF Outcome Theme	SBC Corporate Plan Theme	SBC Corporate Plan Sub-Theme	Cabinet Portfolio	Output or Outcome	Metric Name
1. Homelessness & Rough Sleeping	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Rough sleeping on a single night (official snapshot count)
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	Estimated number of people sleeping rough over a year
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	Number of people supported into settled accommodation after sleeping rough
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of repeat homelessness cases (statutory and non-statutory)
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of households in temporary accommodation
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of households in temporary accommodation with children
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Households in B&B for over 6 weeks
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of people assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of successful prevention or relief duties completed
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of people housed via Housing First
2. Housing	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	% of new homes delivered that are affordable
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	Net additional dwellings per year
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of homes for social rent delivered
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of long-term empty homes
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of households on the housing waiting list
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	% of housing stock that is non-decent
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	% of homes with EPC rating C or above
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	Proportion of private renters living in homes with Category 1 hazards (HHSRS)
	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	Rent levels: Median private rent as % of median local earnings

20		More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	% of new homes built meeting Building Regulations Part M(4) Category 2 or 3 (accessible homes)
21		More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of new homes consented through planning
22		More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of homes improved through enforcement or intervention
23		More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	% of homes improved following intervention
24	3. Multiple Disadvantage	More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	% of people with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues supported by joined-up services
25		More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	% of people facing multiple disadvantage who report improved wellbeing, housing or employment stability
26		More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	% of service users experiencing fewer repeat episodes of crisis or homelessness
27		More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Output	Number of individuals supported by coordinated, multi-agency interventions
28		More Social, Affordable & Good Quality Homes	Maintaining Good Quality Homes	Housing & Housing Development	Outcome	% of local systems implementing MEAM/Changing Futures-style coordinated delivery models
29	4. Best Start in Life	N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of children achieving a good level of development at age 5
30		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of children in reception year who are overweight or obese
31		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of eligible children taking up funded early education entitlements
32		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of early years providers rated good or outstanding by Ofsted
33		N/a	N/a	N/a	Output	Number of parenting or early childhood support interventions delivered locally
34		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of families engaging with parenting or early years support offers
35	5. Every Child Achieving & Thriving	N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of pupils achieving expected standard in reading, writing, and maths at KS2
36		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	Progress 8 score (secondary school progress measure)
37		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of 16–17-year-olds not in education, employment, or training (NEET)
38		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of children with special educational needs achieving expected outcomes

39		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of persistent absentees in primary and secondary schools
40		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of children permanently excluded from school
41	6. Keeping Children Safe & Family Stability	N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of children's social care assessments resulting in no further action
42		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of children in care with three or more placements in a year
43		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of care leavers in education, employment or training
44		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of children on child protection plans for 3+ months with repeat referrals
45		N/a	N/a	N/a	Output	Number of children supported through early help or family support services
46		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of assessments completed within statutory timescales
47	7. Health & Wellbeing	Cross Cutting Themes	Health & Wellbeing	Culture, Leisure & Wellbeing	Outcome	Healthy life expectancy at birth
48		Cross Cutting Themes	Health & Wellbeing	Culture, Leisure & Wellbeing	Outcome	Gap in life expectancy between most and least deprived deciles
49		Cross Cutting Themes	Health & Wellbeing	Culture, Leisure & Wellbeing	Outcome	% of adults reporting high life satisfaction (ONS Wellbeing Index)
50		Cross Cutting Themes	Health & Wellbeing	Culture, Leisure & Wellbeing	Outcome	% of adults meeting recommended physical activity levels
51		Cross Cutting Themes	Health & Wellbeing	Culture, Leisure & Wellbeing	Outcome	% of adults with common mental health conditions accessing treatment
52		Cross Cutting Themes	Health & Wellbeing	Culture, Leisure & Wellbeing	Outcome	% of population receiving NHS Health Check (where eligible)
53		Cross Cutting Themes	Health & Wellbeing	Culture, Leisure & Wellbeing	Outcome	% of smokers supported to quit successfully
54	8. Adult Social Care – Safe, High Quality	N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of people who use services who say those services make them feel safe
55		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of people who use services who are satisfied with their care and support
56		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	Proportion of care services rated Good or Outstanding by the CQC
57		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of safeguarding enquiries with risk reduced or removed

58		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of completed safeguarding enquiries within statutory timescales
59		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	Proportion of care providers with no quality concerns
60	9. Adult Social Care – Independence & Control	N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of people who use services who have control over their daily life
61		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of adults with a learning disability in paid employment
62		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of adults with a learning disability living in settled accommodation
63		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehab services
64		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of new clients receiving reablement or intermediate care services following hospital discharge
65		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of adults with personal budgets or direct payments
66	10. Adult Social Care – Supported in Community	N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of people who use services who have as much social contact as they want
67		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of carers who have as much social contact as they want
68		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of carers who are satisfied with the support they receive
69		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of people who use services who find it easy to find information about support
70		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of eligible carers receiving a carers’ assessment
71		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of people receiving support to live in their own home rather than residential care
72	11. Safe & Inclusive Neighbourhoods	Thriving Neighbourhoods	Community Safety	Stronger Communities	Outcome	% of residents who feel safe in their local area
73		Thriving Neighbourhoods	Community Safety	Stronger Communities	Outcome	% of residents who feel they belong to their local area
74		Thriving Neighbourhoods	Community Safety	Stronger Communities	Outcome	% of residents who feel people from different backgrounds get on well together locally
75		Thriving Neighbourhoods	Community Safety	Stronger Communities Neighbourhoods & Older People Co-operative Council & Tenancy Involvement	Outcome	% of residents who trust their local council to act in their best interests

76		Thriving Neighbourhoods	Community Safety	Stronger Communities Neighbourhoods & Older People Co-operative Council & Tenancy Involvement	Outcome	% of residents aware of and engaging with community services or groups
77		Thriving Neighbourhoods	Community Safety	Stronger Communities Neighbourhoods & Older People Co-operative Council & Tenancy Involvement	Outcome	% of local partnership boards or forums with representation from underrepresented communities
78	12. Environment & Climate	Thriving Neighbourhoods	Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Environment & Climate Change	Output	Residual household waste per household (kg)
79		Thriving Neighbourhoods	Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Environment & Climate Change	Outcome	% of household waste reused, recycled or composted
80		Thriving Neighbourhoods	Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Environment & Climate Change	Output	Number of fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population
81		Tackling Climate Change	Tackling Climate Change	Environment & Climate Change	Output	Per capita CO ₂ emissions (LA-level estimates)
82		Tackling Climate Change	Tackling Climate Change	Environment & Climate Change	Outcome	% of homes at risk of flooding with flood alleviation in place
83		Tackling Climate Change	Tackling Climate Change	Environment & Climate Change	Output	Number of electric vehicle charging points per 100,000 population
84		Tackling Climate Change	Tackling Climate Change	Environment & Climate Change	Outcome	% of council buildings with EPC rating C or above
85		Tackling Climate Change	Tackling Climate Change	Environment & Climate Change	Output	Number of climate adaptation or mitigation interventions delivered locally
86	13. Transport & Infrastructure	N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of principal A roads requiring maintenance
87		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of non-principal classified roads requiring maintenance
88		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of residents satisfied with local transport infrastructure
89		N/a	N/a	N/a	Outcome	% of population with access to key services via public transport
90		N/a	N/a	N/a	Output	Number of potholes or carriageway defects repaired
91		N/a	N/a	N/a	Output	Number of local transport improvement schemes delivered
92		Transforming Our Town	Enterprise & Skills	Economy, Skills and Transport	Outcome	Employment rate (working-age population)
93		Transforming Our Town	Enterprise & Skills	Economy, Skills and Transport	Outcome	Median workplace earnings

94	14. Economic Prosperity & Regeneration	Transforming Our Town	Enterprise & Skills	Economy, Skills and Transport	Output	Ratio of resident to workplace earnings
95		Transforming Our Town	Enterprise & Skills	Economy, Skills and Transport	Output	Business births per 10,000 population
96		Transforming Our Town	Enterprise & Skills	Economy, Skills and Transport	Outcome	% of working-age population with Level 3+ qualifications
97		Transforming Our Town	Regeneration	Transforming Stevenage	Output	Net change in commercial or employment floorspace
98		Transforming Our Town	Enterprise & Skills	Economy, Skills and Transport	Output	Number of new business support or skills interventions delivered locally
99		Transforming Our Town	Regeneration	Transforming Stevenage	Output	Number of regeneration or infrastructure schemes completed
100	15. Child Poverty	Thriving Neighbourhoods	Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Neighbourhoods & Older People Co-operative Council & Tenancy Involvement	Outcome	% of children in relative low-income households
101		Thriving Neighbourhoods	Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Neighbourhoods & Older People Co-operative Council & Tenancy Involvement	Outcome	% of children in absolute low-income households
102		Thriving Neighbourhoods	Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Neighbourhoods & Older People Co-operative Council & Tenancy Involvement	Outcome	% of children eligible for Free School Meals
103		Thriving Neighbourhoods	Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces	Neighbourhoods & Older People Co-operative Council & Tenancy Involvement	Output	Number of targeted poverty reduction or cost-of-living interventions delivered

Risk Management Policy

Stevenage Borough Council

2025

Date created	July 2025
Approved by	Chief Executive/Portfolio Holder for Risk
Owner	Strategic Director
Version	003
Author	Joe Maggs, Corporate Performance and Improvement Officer
Business Unit and Team	Corporate Policy and Performance
Policy Review Date	July 2027 (All policies should be reviewed every 2 years or earlier if there is a change in legislation)
Equality Impact Assessment Date	July 2025

For translations, braille or large print versions of this document please email equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

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1. Risk Policy Statement

The Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage the risks it faces effectively in order to:

- Ensure that statutory obligations and policy objectives are met
- Prioritise areas for improvement in service provision and encourage meeting or exceeding customer and stakeholder expectations
- Safeguard its employees, clients and service users, members, and all other stakeholders to whom the council has a duty of care
- Protect its property and assets including buildings, equipment, vehicles, information and all other assets and resources
- Identify and manage potential liabilities
- Maintain effective control of public funds and the efficient deployment and use of resources to achieve 'value for money'
- Preserve and promote the reputation of the council
- Support the quality of the environment
- Engage effectively with its partner organisations and wider community
- Learn from previous threats, opportunities, successes, and failures to inform the future management of risks.

Risk management is an integral part of the Council's corporate governance arrangements and has been built into the management processes as part of the Council's overall framework to deliver continuous improvement. All Members and officers have a responsibility and a role to play in managing risk.

The Council will seek to achieve effective risk management by:

- Implementing a Risk Management Framework that is fit for purpose and which complements the other governance processes of the Council
- Equipping all employees and elected members with the skills required to identify and assess risk and communicate this appropriately and effectively
- Acknowledging that increasingly risks are shared across partner organisations, which can increase the complexity of analysis and reporting, and that assurances regarding the level of risk may need to be sought from third parties as well as internal sources
- Annually reviewing the effectiveness of risk management and reporting the results as part of the Annual Governance Statement
- Considering on a continuous basis that the council's approach remains in line with good practice, whilst reviewing the Policy and Framework formally every two years.

Signed:

Leader of the Council

Chief Executive

2. Purpose

2.1 This policy sets out the Council's approach to managing risk and replaces the previous Risk Management Policy (2023) (v002). The policy aims to enable the effective management of risk, including strategic, operational, partnership and project risks. Effective management of risks supports the achievement of the Council's objectives.

3. Scope

3.1 It is the responsibility of all Members and employees to be aware of risk in carrying out their duties and ensure that risks are taken in a structured and well managed manner. Officers are accountable for the delivery of this policy within their areas of responsibility, and for encouraging partners to act accordingly.

3.2 A robust risk management culture requires a widespread understanding of, and commitment to, risk management principles. Members and staff from all service areas need to be familiar with the Council's risk management arrangements and their own role and responsibilities.

4. Legal Framework

4.1 Stevenage Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and to proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. The Council has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999, to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

4.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, Stevenage Borough Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which include arrangements for the management of risk.

4.3 The Council is statutorily required to produce an Annual Governance Statement each year which provides a comprehensive overview of how the organisation has maintained effective governance, managed risks, and ensured accountability during the financial year.

4.4 The CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework sets the standard for local authority governance in the UK. The concept underpinning the framework is to support local government in developing and shaping an informed approach to governance, aimed at achieving the highest standards of governance in a measured and proportionate way.

4.5 Having effective Risk Management arrangements is a key aspect of the above-mentioned framework. Principle F of the framework identifies that public bodies should manage risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management. This risk management policy and associated processes outlined in the Risk Management

Guide will enable the Council to have in place the arrangements and behaviours expected of public bodies as set out in the framework.

4.6 The Annual Governance Statement is produced each year following a review of the Council's governance arrangements which includes a review of the management of the Council's risk arrangements against the requirements of the framework.

5. Equalities

5.1 Under the Equality Act (2010) the Council has a legal duty to fulfil the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Through this duty and in the application of this policy, the council will carry out its functions in a way that:

- a. Removes discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is unlawful under the Equality Act (2010)
- b. Promotes equal opportunities between people who have a protected characteristic(s) and those who don't
- c. Encourages good relations between people who have a protected characteristic(s) and those who don't

Further information on the Council's fulfilment of the Equality Act (2010) is set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy (2022) and Reasonable Adjustment Policy (2024).

6. Data Protection

6.1 The Council regards respect for the privacy of individuals and the lawful and careful treatment of personal information as very important to delivery of services.

6.2 The Council will ensure that it treats personal information lawfully and proportionately as set out in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (2018). For further information on the Council's approach to handling information please see [Data Protection Act \(stevenage.gov.uk\)](https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/data-protection-act)

7. Policy

7.1 Introduction

Good corporate governance requires mechanisms to be in place for the identification and management of risk. There must be a clear focus on managing risks that can prevent the Council from achieving its priorities as set out in the Council's Making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan (Strategic Risks), delivering services as planned (Operational Risks) and fulfilling its statutory duties. This Policy seeks to provide a mechanism for the management of these risks.

7.2 Key Concepts

Risk:

7.2.1 Risk is a word and concept that is used in many everyday scenarios. In relation to Council business and activities, risk can be defined as the effect of uncertainty on objectives. In practical terms, a risk can be thought of as a potential (uncertain) event that could impact our strategic or operational priorities.

7.2.2 It is important to note from this definition that risks are events that have not yet happened (if the event has already taken place then it should be dealt with as an issue or incident) and also that the outcome of an uncertain event can be positive as well as negative.

7.2.3 When a risk is identified, it should be recorded describing the possible event, cause and consequences. Further detail on the process of recording risks is provided later in this policy.

Risk management:

7.2.4 Risk management is the coordinated activities designed and operated to address risks and exercise internal control within the Council. It includes the identification and consideration of risks in the context of the Council's strategic plan and objectives.

Internal control:

7.2.5 A system of internal control is the framework of processes, policies, procedures, and practices applied to manage risks and ensure effective governance.

7.2.6 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Council to have in place a sound system of internal control which includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

Governance:

7.2.7 Governance (also referred to as corporate governance) refers to the systems and processes through which an organisation is directed and controlled. Effective governance enables clarity of strategic purpose and robust monitoring of performance and compliance. It ensures that an organisation acts in alignment with the interests of its various stakeholders and with accountability. Risk management and internal control are important components of a governance framework.

Assurance:

7.2.8 Assurance is the confidence that can be derived from objective information that an agreed course of action (whether a strategy or component of the internal control framework) is being implemented effectively and achieving its intended outcomes. It is a cross-cutting concept that supports good governance in general as well as effective risk management.

7.3 The Benefits Of Effective Risk Management

7.3.1 Risk management is fundamentally about making better decisions. It is an integral part of good planning and transparent decision making at both an operational and strategic level.

It is essential to the effective use of resources, providing assurance that the Council has a sound system of internal control and robust corporate governance arrangements. Management of risk also plays an important role in protecting the Council's reputation and assets and in managing key partnerships and projects.

7.3.2 A robust risk management culture requires widespread understanding of and commitment to risk management principles. Members and staff need to be familiar with the Council's risk management arrangements and their own role and responsibilities.

7.3.2 The benefits of a culture where consideration and management of risk is fully integrated in day-to-day decision-making are significant:

- Increased likelihood of achieving strategic and operational objectives
- Better planning and prioritisation of resources
- Early warning of potential problems
- Proactive approach to uncertainty
- Improved stakeholder confidence
- Better management of partnership arrangements
- Protection of Council assets
- Informed balance between innovation and risk avoidance
- Ability to identify and take advantage of opportunities
- Demonstrates good governance

7.4 The Risk Management Framework

7.4.1 The Council's risk management framework comprises five steps which form a continuous process:



Identify context and objectives

7.4.2 The first step is to consider the Council's strategic and operational objectives and the context in which it operates, including legal, social, political and cultural factors. This sets the scene for further consideration of potential risks and their component elements. A thorough understanding of the context and objectives ensures that risk management is grounded in the organisation. The environment in which the Council operates can change over time based on a range of internal and external factors, which is why it is important that this step is revisited as part of the continuous process.

Identify the risk

7.4.3 With the context and objectives in mind, the next step is to consider the activities and events that provide exposure to uncertainty and threaten strategic and / or operational priorities.

7.4.4 Once a risk has been identified, it should be defined (i.e. described) based on the following structure to ensure it captures the key elements needed to manage the risk and is consistent with other risks:

1. Risk event (e.g. There is a risk of x),
2. Cause (e.g. due to y),
3. Potential consequences (e.g. this would result in z).

7.4.5 Each risk should be categorised by service area and whether it relates to strategic, operational or programme/project delivery and assigned an owner that is appropriate for the level and scoring of the risk.

- Strategic risks: These concern the long-term strategic objectives of the Council (i.e. the Corporate Plan). There is a central strategic risk register for the Council where these are recorded.
- Operational risks: These concern the day-to-day issues that the Council faces as it works to deliver its strategic objectives. Operational risk registers exist at service level.
- Programme / project risks: These are the risks associated with specific programmes or projects and monitored at service level.

7.4.6 The Council maintains strategic and operational risk registers centrally, while programme / project risk registers are developed and held at a local level. The detail captured through this and the next two stages (assessing and addressing the risk) should be recorded in the relevant risk register.

Note: Please see the attached appendices 1 & 2 for further guidance and templates to assist with the process of identifying and documenting risks:

- Appendix 1 – Risk management guide for staff
- Appendix 2 – Risk register template for project / programme risks

Assess the risk

7.4.7 Once a risk has been identified and defined, the likelihood and potential impact of the risk should be calculated.

7.4.8 The assessment of both impact and likelihood is largely a matter of judgement. However, it should be informed by experience, data, subject matter expertise, and other reliable sources of intelligence to ensure a well-founded evaluation.

7.4.9 Risk scoring involves evaluating two main factors, impact and likelihood:

- Impact refers to the potential consequences of the event, expressed in terms of loss, injury, disadvantage, or other negative outcomes. This is assigned a numerical score on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 (insignificant), 2 (minor), 3 (moderate), 4 (significant), 5 (major)).
- Likelihood refers to the probability or frequency of the event occurring, described using qualitative or quantitative measures, depending on what is most appropriate. Again, these are rated on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 (rare), 2 (unlikely), 3 (possible), 4 (likely), 5 (almost certain)).

7.4.10 Please see the associated risk management guidance for staff (Appendix 1) for more detail on the risk scoring criteria.

7.4.11 The risk score is calculated by multiplying the likelihood score by the impact score. The score can then be plotted on the risk score matrix (a 5x5 grid, as below) which will grade the overall risk as either 'low', 'medium', 'high' or 'very high'. This process highlights the significance of each risk and its score relative to others.

	Likelihood					
		1	2	3	4	5
Impact	5	5 Medium	10 High	15 High	20 Very High	25 Very High
	4	4 Low	8 Medium	12 High	16 Very High	20 Very High
	3	3 Low	6 Medium	9 Medium	12 High	15 High
	2	2 Low	4 Low	6 Medium	8 Medium	10 High
	1	1 Low	2 Low	3 Low	4 Low	5 Medium

7.4.12 There should be three risk scores for each risk:

- Inherent / unmitigated: The risk score on the day it is identified, before any controls have been put in place.
- Current: The level of risk at the time of the latest review, taking into account actions taken to manage the risk.
- Target: The level of risk the Council is prepared to take in pursuit of its goals. The SLT will consider the appropriateness of the target scores for strategic risks on a regular basis.

7.4.13 Where there is more than one potential impact, the highest impact score should be used for the purpose of scoring the risk, but it is important that risk assessments are reasonable and proportionate to support effective risk management and strategic decision making.

Address the risk

7.4.14 The next step is to identify actions to manage the risk. Options for responding to risks fall into the following categories:

- Treat – Taking action to reduce the likelihood and/or impact of the risk.
- Transfer – Moving the risk to another party (e.g. by taking out insurance).
- Terminate – Ceasing to take the action that causes the risk.
- Tolerate – It may not be possible to mitigate the risk or all mitigations may be exhausted and a level of risk is accepted.

7.4.15 The aim is to minimise the risk (ideally to the target score) whilst ensuring that the level of risk accepted is balanced against the accepted cost / reward of taking the mitigating actions. All mitigating actions should be assigned an action owner and timescale for implementation (though some mitigating actions will effectively be recurring actions that should be reviewed on a periodic basis e.g. maintaining policies, ensuring training is undertaken, etc.). It can be helpful to approach

this step by thinking about which actions are preventative (to stop the risk materialising) and which are corrective (to reduce its impact if it does occur).

7.4.16 Once actions are identified, these should be captured on the risk register.

Monitor, review and report

7.4.17 The aim of this part of the process is to ensure that planned risk management actions are implemented and monitored as to their effectiveness and corrective action is taken when the performance does not match expectations. This regular review process should occur both in response to changes and, in the absence of changes, to confirm that the current assessments remain valid and appropriate. This is also an opportunity to consider whether risks should be escalated or de-escalated based on the latest scoring and strategic context.

7.4.18 For the Strategic and Operational risk registers there is a cycle of periodic reviews led by the Corporate Policy and Business Support team, however if a new risk arises, or there are significant changes to existing risks between the periodic reviews, officers should update the risk register accordingly.

7.4.19 The Corporate Risk Group meets quarterly to review the Council's risk management arrangements, the Strategic and Operational risks, as well as certain health and safety risks and compliance of the Council's facilities and estates. Following this, any areas of concern are escalated to the SLT as required. In addition:

- Assistant Directors are responsible for monitoring Service Level Operational Risk Registers at least 6 monthly (some risks will need more frequent review).
- Strategic risks are reviewed quarterly by the risk owner, Corporate Risk Group and SLT. They are also reported to Audit Committee.

7.5 Key Responsibilities Regarding Risk Management

7.5.1 All Council staff and Members have a role to play in effective risk management.

All Employees	Be aware of and comply with the risk management policy. Report any identified risks.
Council Members	Understand the key risks faced by the Council and the approach to managing these. Consider risks in decision making.

Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team	Provide leadership and direction for risk management. Ensure that risk management is integrated into the Council's strategic planning and decision-making processes. Setting and demonstrating the organisational risk culture. Monitoring management of the strategic risks. Consider the Council's risk appetite in relation to current and emerging risks and opportunities.
Audit Committee	Seek assurance over the governance of risk, including leadership, integration of risk management into wider governance arrangements and the ownership of and accountability for risks. Keep up to date with the risk profile and the effectiveness of risk management actions. Monitor the effectiveness of risk management arrangements and support the development and embedding of good practice in risk management.
Corporate Risk Group	Oversee the development and implementation of the risk management policy. Review risk registers and ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place.
Corporate Performance and Improvement Officer (Risk & Governance)	Develop and maintain the risk management framework. Provide updates regarding risk management activity to the Corporate Risk Group, SLT and Audit Committee. Provide training and support to staff and Audit Committee members on risk management practices.
Service Managers	Identify and manage risks within their respective departments. Ensure that risk management practices are followed by their teams.
Project / Partnership Managers	Ensure that the appropriate risk management arrangements are created and maintained relevant to the project or partnership arrangements and there is regular reporting to the relevant senior management / project board / partnership board.
Internal Audit	Conduct independent reviews of the risk management processes. Provide assurance on the effectiveness of risk management practices.

External Stakeholders and Partners	Collaborate with the Council on risk management initiatives. Provide input and feedback on risk management practices and policies.
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8. Consultation

8.1 Due to the internal nature of this Policy, consultation is not required.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 This policy will be reviewed by the relevant Business Unit's Head of Service or Service Manager every 2 years (see page 1 for details of Business Unit) or earlier if there is a change in legislation. Where more than 10% of the policy content is changed the Assistant Director and appropriate Portfolio Holder will be required to decide if the policy needs to be formally reconsidered by the Cabinet or appropriate decision-making body.

9.2 Where there is a request for the content of the policy to be reviewed in response to a complaint, the relevant Business Unit's Assistant Director will be notified. If the Assistant Director agrees that a review of policy is required, this will be discussed with the appropriate Portfolio Holder. The Head of Service or Service Manager will be responsible for implementing a subsequent policy review.

10. References and Resources

- CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016 Edition): <https://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/publications/d/delivering-good-governance-in-local-government-framework-2016-edition>
- Best Value guidance: [Best value standards and intervention: a statutory guide for best value authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-value-standards-and-intervention-a-statutory-guide-for-best-value-authorities)
- The Orange Book - Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts: [The Orange Book – Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-orange-book-management-of-risk-principles-and-concepts)
- ALARM Risk Management Guide
- LGA Must know guide: Risk management: [Must know guide: Risk management | Local Government Association](https://www.local.gov.uk/must-know-guide/risk-management)

11. Acronyms and Definitions

EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
MSEB	Making Stevenage Even Better
PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty
SBC	Stevenage Brough Council

See also 'Key concepts' in sections 6.2 – 6.12, above.

12. Appendices

1. Risk management guide for staff
2. Risk register template for project / programme risks

13. Version History

Date	Outlined Amendments	Author
July 2025	Significant rewrite of most sections.	Joe Maggs (Corporate Performance and Improvement Officer)

Part I – Release to Press



Agenda item: ###

Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area Environment and Climate Change
Date 17th September 2025



LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANIOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976 – REVOCATION OF TAXI RANK, DANESTRETE, STEVENAGE.

Authors Julie Dwan – Licensing Manager | 2493
Lead Officers Alex Robinson – Assistant Director for Planning and Regulation | 2288
Contact Officer Julie Dwan | 2493

NON-KEY DECISION

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1** To consider proposals to revoke the taxi rank on Danestrete, Stevenage, as required under Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, to facilitate the safe continuation of the SG1 regeneration scheme (Plot A) by repositioning the existing hoarding line to the kerb edge, thus allowing necessary scaffolding access and additional working space.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** That Cabinet approves the revocation of the adopted taxi rank in Danestrete, Stevenage.
- 2.2** That Cabinet notes that officers are looking at the potential for relocating the aforementioned taxi rank to another site within the Town Centre.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1** Stevenage Borough Council, pursuant to its powers under Section 63 of the Local government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, appointed Hackney Carriage stands in Coreys Mill Lane, Danestrete and Westgate Stevenage. This order came into force on 2nd April 2017. A copy of the order and schedule is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2** The designated taxi rank on Danestrete is situated on the west side of the carriageway, commencing at a point 33 metres south of the centreline of its junction with Swingate, and extending southwards for a distance of 15 metres. This taxi stand can accommodate up to three licensed vehicles at any one time.
- 3.3** SG1 is the Town Centre's flagship regeneration scheme. Promoted by Stevenage Borough Council in partnership with developer Mace, this 14.5-acre mixed-use development focuses on revitalising the town centre through residential, commercial, cultural, and civic facilities.
- 3.4** In 2019, Mace submitted the outline planning application for the SG1 masterplan, covering 14.5 acres including Swingate House (Plot A), the adjacent car park, and the former police building (Plot K), alongside the rest of the scheme. At the end of September 2019, a separate planning application was submitted for the first phase of the SG1 regeneration programme (known as the former Swingate House site). Works began in 2024. However, the hoarding line needs to be adjusted on the East side to accommodate scaffolding and ensure full delivery of the site. This would mean the current footway along the hoarding line would be removed and thus removing the pedestrian crossing to Westgate.
- 3.5** In addition to this becoming a construction requirement, the need to keep pedestrians safe and to maintain access in and around Westgate means a temporary footway will need to be installed alongside the Western side of the hoarding line. The works would see the removal of the taxi rank situated on Danestrete, in order that construction happens safely for construction, road and pedestrian traffic. Details of the proposal is contained in Appendix B.

Reasons for the Proposal

- 3.6** The proposal to remove the taxi rank in Danestrete is essential to provide the scaffold access and additional working space necessary to complete the building works safely. In parallel, the owners of the Westgate Centre, located on the east side of Danestrete, are planning to undertake their own improvement works within the same area, further increasing the need for coordinated management of space and pedestrian movement.
- 3.7** Following detailed review, the only practicable option is to provide a temporary pedestrian walkway along the western side of the carriageway. All other potential diversion routes have been assessed and found to be either operationally unfeasible, unsafe, or non-compliant with access standards.

- 3.8** An existing taxi bay on Westgate will remain operational and unaffected by these changes, ensuring continued provision of taxi provision in the town centre throughout the works period (Appendix C). This arrangement seeks to balance the operational needs of the development, the safety of the public, and the continued availability of essential transport services.

Consultation

- 3.9** In line with the statutory requirements set out in sections 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council must give notice to the Chief Officer of Police. A public notice must also be provided in one local newspaper. Any objections which are received within 28 days of the first publication of the public notice must be taken into account, including any comments from the Chief Officer of Police, before such a stand is appointed, revoked or varied.
- 3.10** The Licensing Authority conducted a 28-day public consultation on the proposed revocation of the taxi rank in Danestrete. The consultation was held between 14th July and 11th August 2025. Full details of the proposed revocation were published Council's website, including a plan of the works to be carried out, an explanation of the reasons for the changes, information about the consultation period and instructions on how to submit representations. In addition to this, a Public Notice was displayed at the Customer Service Centre, Daneshill House, and published in the Comet newspaper on 17th July 2025.
- 3.11** An email notification was also circulated to all Stevenage-licensed taxi and private hire drivers, vehicle proprietors, and operators; and a taxi forum was held during the consultation period, where the Licensing team were available to discuss the proposals, answer queries and listen to any concerns raised by members of the trade. Social media posts went out on 4th August for the remainder of the consultation period. Copies of all public notices are included as background documents.
- 3.12** The Council did not receive any responses from police, members of the public or the taxi/private hire trade.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1** Failure to authorise the extension and realignment of the hoarding will necessitate the suspension of works on the SG1 Plot A development. Without this adjustment, there is no feasible alternative to provide the scaffold access and additional working area required to complete the remaining construction activities safely and in compliance with health and safety regulations.
- 4.2** The repositioning of the hoarding also removes all other safe pedestrian diversion routes. Extensive reviews of alternative options have been

undertaken, and each has been deemed either operationally unviable or non-compliant with safety standards.

- 4.3** Consequently, the only practicable solution is the provision of a temporary footway along the revised hoarding line, ensuring both the continuation of works and the safe passage of pedestrians. This approach mitigates significant programme delays, avoids potential contractual claims, and upholds statutory safety obligations.
- 4.4** It is important to also note that there were no objections to the proposal following the public consultation. The Unmet demand survey which was carried out on behalf of Stevenage Borough Council in September 2023 highlighted that the Danestrete taxi rank is one of the lesser used taxi ranks in Stevenage. There is an alternative rank approximately 45 metres away on Westgate.
- 4.5** The Council are looking at options to relocate the Danestrete taxi rank to another location within the Town Centre.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.2** Failure to proceed with this proposal would present significant financial risks to the Council. The inability to extend and reposition the hoarding in line with construction requirements would halt progress on the SG1 Plot A development.
- 5.1.3** This could trigger Liquidated and Ascertained Damages (LADs) under the construction contract, resulting in substantial unplanned costs. There would also be a loss of the Council's investment to date in the scheme, currently totalling £4.2 million, alongside abortive expenditure on design and pre-construction work already undertaken. Further delay could also result in increased contractor costs and jeopardise wider programme delivery, impacting the regeneration timetable and potential inward investment.
- 5.1.4** Proceeding with the proposal will involve a one-off implementation cost of approximately £10,000. This covers the works required to create the temporary pedestrian walkway and adjust the hoarding line. Costs will be covered through the joint venture between Stevenage Borough Council and Mace.
- 5.1.5** This investment will safeguard the continuation of the SG1 Plot A development, avoid the risk of LADs and abortive costs, and protect the Council's strategic objectives for the town centre regeneration.
- 5.1.6** When considered in the context of the overall project value and the financial risks of inaction, the implementation cost represents a proportionate and necessary expenditure to ensure delivery.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1** Under Section 63(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council has the power to appoint, alter, or remove taxi ranks

(hackney carriage stands) within the district. However, this power is subject to the procedural requirements set out in Section 63(2), which must be strictly followed to ensure legality and to mitigate the risk of challenge.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out in August 2025. No significant impacts were identified to any individuals or businesses. A copy of the Equalities Impact Assessment can be found at Appendix D.

5.4 Community Safety Implications

- 5.4.1 The removal of a designated taxi rank has several potential implications for community safety, which must be carefully considered as part of the decision-making process under Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

- 5.4.2 Public Safety and evening economy. Taxi ranks, particularly those located near pubs, clubs, or transport hubs, play a critical role in supporting safe dispersal of people at night, especially in town centres. Their removal may lead to:

- Increased risk of anti-social behaviour, loitering, or disorder as people search for alternative transport;
- Congestion and crowding in inappropriate areas not designed for waiting passengers;
- Greater reliance on unregulated or informal pick-up points, potentially increasing the risk of illegal plying for hire.

- 5.4.3 Vulnerability and Personal Safety. Taxi ranks provide a visible, well-lit, and regulated location where individuals, especially vulnerable groups such as lone women, young people, or those with disabilities, can access safe transport. Removal of these ranks could:

- Increase the risk of harassment or assault, particularly late at night;
- Reduce accessibility to safe and reliable transport options for those with mobility issues or special needs.

- 5.4.4 Illegal and Unsafe Parking. In the absence of a rank, taxis may begin to wait in non-designated or unsafe locations, potentially causing:

- Traffic hazards or obstruction of emergency routes;
- Increased complaints from residents or local businesses.

- 5.4.5 Impact on emergency Services and Policing. Designated taxi ranks assist the police and emergency services in maintaining order and managing footfall in busy areas. Their removal may:

- Complicate crowd management, especially during events and/or busy weekend periods;
 - Divert police resources to manage unregulated pick-up activity or disputes over access to informal locations.
- 5.4.6 In assessing the community safety implications of the proposed revocation of the Danestrete taxi rank, careful consideration has been given to the current usage, location, and broader context of transport provision within the town centre.
- 5.4.7 While the Danestrete taxi rank is proposed for removal, it is important to note that an alternative taxi rank remains operational in close proximity, continuing to provide access to licensed vehicles for members of the public.
- 5.4.8 Furthermore, the town centre is not the principal hub of the night-time economy, with the majority of late-night venues, including pubs and restaurants being concentrated along the High Street. The retail premises within the town centre are generally closed by early evening, with the exception of Tesco, which remains open later. Tesco has a telephone available inside the store for customers to book taxis or private hire vehicles if required.
- 5.4.9 Having considered these factors, the revocation of the Danestrete taxi rank is not considered to give rise to significant community safety concerns. Adequate taxi provision remains in place nearby, and the current patterns of night-time activity suggest a limited demand for a rank at this specific location.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 [Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976](#)
- BD2 Consultation Email
- BD3 Newspaper Notice
- BD4 Social Media Post
- BD5 Unmet Demand Survey September 2023

APPENDICES

- A Copy of the Order for the adoption of the Danestrete Taxi rank dated 02/04/2017
- B Proposed works to hoarding line and pedestrian route
- C Revoked and existing taxi bays
- D Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

THE BOROUGH OF STEVENAGE (APPOINTMENT OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE STANDS) (COREYS MILL LANE, DANESTRETE AND WESTGATE, STEVENAGE) ORDER 2016

The STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL pursuant to its powers given under Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 hereby makes the following order:

1. This order will come into force on the *2nd* day of *April* 2017 and may be cited as the Borough of Stevenage (Appointment of Hackney Carriage Stands) (Coreys Mill Lane, Danestrete and Westgate, Stevenage) Order 2016
2. The various places specified in the Schedule hereto are appointed as stands for such number of Hackney Carriages as specified in the Schedule hereto with effect from the date this order comes into operation.
3. The interpretation Act 1978 shall apply for the interpretation of this order as it applies for the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.
4. The provisions of Stevenage Borough Council (Control of Parking) (Consolidation) Order 2013 is hereby revoked only in so far as it affects Stand Danestrete (Rank 2) of the Schedule of the Borough of Stevenage (Appointment of Hackney Carriage Stands) (No.1) Order 2000

The Common Seal of the
Stevenage Borough Council
was hereunto affixed this
20th day of *March* 2017
in the presence of:-

P. H. T. T. T.

Authorised Signatory
Borough/Principal Solicitor



*Dec Dec 22/7/09
as amended
8/12/2010*

SCHEDULE

<u>Stand</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Number of Vehicles</u>
Danestrete (Rank 7)	The west side, from a point 33 metres south of the centreline of its junction with Swingate, southwards for a distance of 15 metres	3
Westgate South (Rank 8)	The south side ,from a point 25 metres east of its junction with Danestrete eastwards for a distance of 17 metres	4
Coreys Mill Lane (Rank 9)	The north side, from a point 20 metres east of its junction with the eastern kerb line of the Lister Hospital PPCI Access Road eastwards to a point 18 metres west of its junction with the western kerblne of its junction with the Lister Hospital Emergency Department Access Road	5

NOTES:

Diag No 517.

House
fices)

Provide and install red
and white waterfilled
traffic separators to
segregate pedestrians
and vehicular traffic.

7.90M
6.30M
1.80M

Ramp

Existing hoarding to be
relocated to front of kerb
as agreed.

Diag 7018

Existing bollards to be
relocated as per
Engineers requirements .

Shared surface

Ramp

Existing dropped kerb to be
widened and No Entry sign
to be relocated.

Diag No 544.1

Diag No 517.

LOADING ONLY

TAXIS

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
Alex Robinson
Assistant Director - Planning & Regulation
Daneshill House,
Danestrete,
Stevenage,
Herts, SG1 1HN.
Telephone: (01438) 242242

PROJECT:
**DANESTRETE
HOARDING
WORKS**

DRAWING:
**PROPOSED LAYOUT
Page 205**

DATE:
JULY 2025

DRAWN BY:
SPB

CHECKED:
MR

SCALE:
NTS

no:	Revision	Date:
DRAWING NUMBER:		

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Revocation of the Taxi Rank in Danestrete, Stevenage

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Form

August 2025

Date created	August 2025
Approved by	Cabinet/SLT
Owner	Julie Dwan – Licensing Manager
Version	1.0
Author	Julie Dwan
Business Unit and Team	Planning & Regulation (Environmental Health & Licensing)

Please [click this link](#) to find the EqIA guidance toolkit for support in completing the following form.

For translations, braille or large print versions of this document please email
equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

First things first:

Does this policy, project, service, or other decision need an EqlA?

Title:	Revocation of the Taxi Rank in Danestrete, Stevenage	
Please answer Yes or No to the following questions:		
Does it affect staff, service users or the wider community?	Yes	
Has it been identified as being important to particular groups of people?	No	
Does it or could it potentially affect different groups of people differently (unequal)?	No	
Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities or exclusion issues?	No	
Will it have an impact on how other organisations operate?	No	
Is there potential for it to cause controversy or affect the council's reputation as a public service provider?	Yes	

Where a positive impact is likely, will this help to:	
Remove discrimination and harassment?	No
Promote equal opportunities?	No
Encourage good relations?	No

If you answered 'Yes' to one or more of the above questions you should carry out an EqlA.

Or if you answered 'No' to all of the questions and decide that your activity doesn't need an EqlA you must explain below why it has no relevance to equality and diversity.

You should reference the information you used to support your decision below and seek approval from your Assistant Director before confirming this by sending this page to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk.

N/A

I determine that no EqlA is needed to inform the decision on the Revocation of the Taxi Rank in Danestrete, Stevenage.

Name of assessor:

Decision approved by:

Role:

Date:

Role:

Date:

Equality Impact Assessment Form

For a policy, project, strategy, staff or service change, or other decision that is new, changing or under review

What is being assessed?		Revocation (Removal) of the Taxi Rank – Danestrete, Stevenage	
Lead Assessor	Julie Dwan		Assessment team
Start date	September 2025	End date	
When will the EqIA be reviewed? (Typically, every 2 years)			

Who may be affected by the proposed project?	Taxi drivers, members of the public
What are the key aims of the proposed project?	The proposal seeks to revoke the existing taxi rank located at Danestrete, Stevenage. The revocation is being considered due to a major development taking place on the west side of Danestrete, which will require the repositioning of the hoarding line to the kerb edge to accommodate the next phase of construction works. Additionally, the owners of the Westgate Centre on the east side of Danestrete are also planning improvement works within the same vicinity. To ensure the safe movement of pedestrians along Danestrete throughout this period, a temporary pedestrian walkway will need to be established along the western side of the carriageway, the layout of this temporary walkway necessitates the removal of the taxi rank on Danestrete for the duration of these works. The existing taxi bay located on Westgate will remain unaffected.

--	--

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment	N/A	Promote equal opportunities	N/A	Encourage good relations	The Council are also exploring suitable alternative locations for a taxi rank elsewhere in the town centre.

What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	Taxi Unmet Demand Survey carried out in September 2023. Public Consultation responses, as a result of a 28-day consultation.
---	---

In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	The existing rank in Westgate, which is in close proximity to the Danestrete rank will remain unaffected.
--	---

Evidence and Impact Assessment

Explain the potential impact and opportunities it could have for people in terms of the following characteristics, where applicable:

Page 213

Age					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Disability e.g., physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	
---	--	--	--

Gender Reassignment					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Marriage or Civil Partnership					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Pregnancy & Maternity

Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Race

Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Religion or Belief

Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information	N/A Impact not expected.				

you used to support this assessment			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	

Sex					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Sexual Orientation e.g., straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Socio-economic ¹					
e.g., low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users, social value in procurement					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	N/A Impact not expected.				
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Additional Considerations					
Please outline any other potential impact on people in any other contexts					
Positive impact		Negative impact		Unequal impact	
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment	The Council are exploring suitable alternative locations for a taxi rank elsewhere in the town centre.				

¹Although non-statutory, the council has chosen to implement the Socio-Economic Duty and so decision-makers should use their discretion to consider the impact on people with a socio-economic disadvantage.

What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)	N/A
---	--	--	-----

Consultation Findings

Document any feedback gained from the following groups of people:

Staff?	Public Consultation – No responses received	Residents?	Public consultation – No responses received
Voluntary & community sector?	Public consultation -No responses received	Partners?	Police Consulted – No responses received
Other stakeholders?	Licensed Taxi/Private Hire Trade consulted – no responses received		

Overall Conclusion & Future Activity

Explain the overall findings of the assessment and reasons for outcome (please choose one) :		
1. No inequality, inclusion issues or opportunities to further improve have been identified	No responses/objections were received as a result of the 28 day consultation period which ran between 14 th July and 11 th August 2025; therefore, I recommend to Cabinet that the taxi rank in Danestrete be revoked and that Cabinet note that the Council are currently exploring suitable alternative location for a Taxi rank elsewhere in the town centre.	
	2a. Adjustments made	

Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2b. Continue as planned	
	2c. Stop and remove	

Detail the **actions that are needed** as a result of this assessment and how they will help to **remove discrimination & harassment, promote equal opportunities** and / or **encourage good relations**:

Action	Will this help to remove, promote and / or encourage?	Responsible officer	Deadline	How will this be embedded as business as usual?
Taxi Unmet Demand survey to be carried out every three years	To assess the demand surrounding each taxi rank and to determine whether there is a need for additional licensed taxis (hackney carriages) to promote equal opportunities.	Julie Dwan	August 2026	

Approved by Assistant Director:

Date: 12.08.25

Please send this EqIA to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk for critical friend feedback and for final submittance with the associated project.

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Part I – Release to Press



Agenda item: ###

Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area Resources and Transformation
Date September 2025



GRENFELL INQUIRY PHASE 2 UPDATE REPORT

AUTHOR – ANDREW HEATH, HEALTH, SAFETY AND RESILIENCE MANAGER

NON-KEY DECISION

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update to Cabinet on the Council's response to the public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire. The public inquiry concluded in September 2024 with the publication of the phase 2 report.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Cabinet acknowledges the action being taken by the Council to strengthen its resilience position, including working in partnership with other Hertfordshire Local Authorities and other Category One Responders to ensure that emergency and business continuity plans across the county are current and robust.
- 2.2 That Cabinet backs a comprehensive review of reception centres and support for individuals that may be impacted by local incidents. This review will incorporate the introduction of digital processes to improve information capture and situational awareness and will explore ways to strengthen regional coordination during emergencies.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Grenfell Public Inquiry report makes a series of recommendations, covering a wide range of organisations including regulators, emergency services, the construction industry, local authorities and social housing providers.
- 3.2 The full report is around 1,700 pages with a more accessible overview paper (Background Document 1) containing the key findings and recommendations. Phase 1 of the report made 46 recommendations which as had a significant influence on both the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2024 and the Building Safety Act 2022. Phase 2 of the report has 58 recommendations. Annex 1 to this paper provides a summary of the recommendations within the phase 2 report that have implications and recommendations for local authorities and social housing providers.
- 3.3 The report made significant criticism of the speed and quality of the emergency response from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and concluded that their emergency planning arrangements and their capacity to respond to a major incident were inadequate. The report stated that:
- In the first week after the fire at Grenfell Tower the response of the government and RBKC was muddled, slow, indecisive and piecemeal.
 - Certain aspects of the response demonstrated a marked lack of respect for human decency and dignity and left many of those immediately affected feeling abandoned by authority and utterly helpless.
 - The response to the disaster was inadequate principally because RBKC did not have an effective plan to deal with the displacement of a large number of people from their homes
 - RBKC emergency planning and staff training and capacity were well below the level required for such an event
 - RBKC made little use of local community or community groups in the response. In particular, the report states “Those who emerge from the events with the greatest credit, and whose contribution only emphasised the inadequacies of the official response, are the members of the local community.
- 3.4 The Grenfell report recommendations relating to emergency planning are relevant to all local authorities. Although resource pressures on local government are a factor, the costs and risks of not properly preparing for a major emergency, both for the council, its partners and the local community are significant.
- 3.5 On the 26th of February 2025 the Government published its formal response to phase 2 of the inquiry’s recommendations. The Government accepted all of the inquiries findings and responded with its intended course of action for each of the recommendations. This provides clarity on the how the Government’s plans to respond to the inquiries findings and there will be further updates or guidance that will confirm the most suitable course of action.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 Stevenage Borough Council is both a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and a Registered Social Landlord. The inquiry report makes significant recommendations that relate to both of these functions of the Council.

Building Safety

- 4.2 The Council's Executive in 2021 agreed a response plan following publication of the Phase 1 report in 2019. Most of the relevant Phase 1 recommendations have now been completed by the Council. These principally relate to the Council's Building Safety and Property Management Service and the fire safety arrangements in place for the Council's tower blocks. The recommendations were assigned into 19 workstreams, 12 workstreams are completed whilst the remaining 7 workstreams are progressing with current mitigation arrangements in place as required.
- 4.3 While the Grenfell Phase 2 report includes several recommendations that are primarily directed at the construction industry and its regulatory framework, these remain relevant to the Council due to our role as a housing provider and commissioner of new developments. The recommendations focus on improving regulatory oversight, strengthening fire safety design and testing processes, and enhancing accountability within the construction sector. Key themes include the need for clearer statutory guidance, more robust fire safety strategies, improved testing of external wall systems, and greater responsibility placed on designers and contractors to ensure buildings meet safety standards.
- 4.4 Although these recommendations do not require direct action from the Council at this stage, they have been considered in our updated self-assessment (see Annex 1). We will continue to monitor developments in these areas, particularly in relation to the Building Safety Act 2022 and any future legislative or regulatory changes that may impact our commissioning practices. This approach ensures that we remain aligned with national expectations and are prepared to respond appropriately should any of these sector-specific recommendations translate into obligations for housing providers or commissioning authorities.

Emergency Planning

- 4.5 The Phase 2 report includes ten new recommendations relevant to the Council's role as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. These recommendations focus on strengthening local authority preparedness, improving training and coordination, and ensuring effective support for individuals affected by emergencies.
- 4.6 Currently, the Council does have emergency plans in place and has responded well to previous emergencies in the borough.
- 4.7 The Council is an active partner in the Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum and joint work arrangements across the county are well established. A cross Hertfordshire local authority working group has been established to review the recommendations and work through these and to share best practice. A

summary of the key findings of this self-assessment and associated actions can be seen below:

- 4.8 The below table shows a summary of the resilience recommendations. This starts at recommendation 47 due to the previous 46 recommendations not requiring direct actions. In the attached table we have extracted all the relevant actions so these can be monitored as they are progressed.

Workstream Description	Status	Current Position	Next Action
Recommendation 47: Adoption of national standards for emergency training and independent auditing.	In Progress	Training matrix developed; gold/silver training delivered to SLT and 4th tier. Emergency awareness training planned for all staff.	Align training matrix with National Qualifications Framework once published.
Recommendation 48: Independent verification of training quality and frequency.	Awaiting Guidance	Awaiting government update.	Review and align with updated National Resilience Standards once released.
Recommendation 49: Embed resilience responsibilities across all staff levels.	In Progress	Covered under Recommendation 47.	Continue rollout of awareness training.
Recommendation 50: Improve systems for recording displaced persons' information.	Planned	Reception centre review scheduled; digital processes to be introduced.	Align with forthcoming government guidance.
Recommendation 51: Ensure access to temporary accommodation that meets personal, religious, and cultural needs.	Ongoing	Existing processes in place using hotels, temporary units, and general needs stock.	Strengthen links with neighbouring districts to share accommodation availability and contacts.
Recommendation 52: Provide immediate financial assistance during emergencies.	Awaiting guidance	Countywide working group reviewing options.	Await government guidance and integrate into local plans.

Workstream Description	Status	Current Position	Next Action
Recommendation 53: Plan for key worker availability and continuity of support.	Awaiting guidance	Emergency and Business Continuity Plans in place.	Maintain and review plans regularly.
Recommendation 54: Ensure communication with those needing assistance in appropriate formats and languages.	Awaiting guidance	Existing communication plans in place.	Review as part of reception centre project.
Recommendation 55: Use modern communication methods to inform the public during emergencies.	Awaiting guidance	Covered under Recommendation 54.	Review and update communication tools and channels.

- 4.9 The more detailed assessment can be seen in annex 1 which also includes the actions from the phase 1 inquiry. These continue to be worked on and monitored through to completion. They are also monitored due to the continuing updates that are still being made in relation to building safety. This includes the potential review of the thresholds for buildings in-scope for the building safety act, most notably the potential lowering of the height threshold down to buildings over 11m versus the current limit of 18m.
- 4.10 Alongside the countywide response the Council has undertaken several internal actions, with further work planned to implement the recommendations from the report.
- 4.11 The recommended actions are designed to ensure the Council remains compliant with evolving national policy and guidance on emergency preparedness and resilience. Taking a proactive approach will help maintain a high standard of preparedness and ensure that staff at all levels are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to respond effectively to emergencies.
- 4.12 The planned review of reception centres and support for individuals reflects the need to modernise and streamline our potential response in line with emerging best practices. By incorporating digital processes and improving data capture, the Council can enhance its ability to manage incidents efficiently and provide timely support to affected individuals. Collaboration with neighbouring districts on accommodation availability and key contacts will also strengthen regional resilience and improve coordination during large-scale or cross-boundary incidents.

- 4.13 While individually these may be small changes collectively, they represent a significant strengthening of the Council's emergency planning arrangements. This is also combined with wider changes to the government's approach to national resilience where it is prioritising the country's preparedness to a range of risks will mean there is a greater expectation that local authorities have robust and well-integrated emergency response plans and that these are focused on known risks, local populations and suitable means to manage an effective response.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 Currently there is a budget of £5,000 for resilience training and preparedness which will cover the costs to train our staff and purchase any equipment that may be required to incorporate a digital process into our reception centres.

Legal Implications

- 5.2 This report provides Cabinet with a comprehensive summary of the findings of the Grenfell Phase 2 report. The relevant legislation is referred to in the body of the report with revision to the Civil Contingency's Act expected in the near future.

Risk Implications

- 5.3 The Council's corporate risks currently include reference to the need for the Council to be effectively prepared for a major emergency. This report identifies further actions to improve the Council's emergency planning arrangements, and the current mitigations are set out in the council's Emergency Plan and the action plan attached with this report.

Policy Implications

- 5.4 Following a review of the reception centres the council's emergency plan will need to be updated.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.5 The recommendations will require the council to ensure that it has considered the needs of all individuals. As part of the review of reception centres there will be a need to ensure the Council have considered all of the equality and diversity requirements and ensure the council's plans can best accommodate any specific needs.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 1.1 All documents that have been used in compiling this report, that may be available to the public, i.e. they do not contain exempt information, should be listed here:**

BD1 Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report Overview

APPENDICES

- A Annex 1 – updated Self-Assessment – Grenfell Phase 1 and 2 Recommendations

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Building Safety Act – Implementation Update

No	Workstream Description	Deadline	Status	Current Position	Next Action
1	Council wide briefing	April-23	Ongoing	Various Briefings have now been held across the Housing & Investment Team	Ensure regular updates are fed through the teams as they occur.
2	Duty Holders – Define Duty Holders under the BSA	April-23	Completed	All roles defined, including all the Fire Safety Team roles. Included in Building Safety Policy	
3	Building Safety Signage	Oct-23	Ongoing	Trial of new digital noticeboard now installed at The Towers. Trial to also be installed at Silkin Court on screens in communal areas.	Completed – all digital notice boards are in place and operational.
4	Building Safety Case(s)	Oct-23	Completed	Version one of all Building Safety cases have been logged with the regulator.	These will be regularly updated and reviewed, as necessary.
Page 229	Register all HRRBs with Building Safety Regulator		Completed	All sites now registered	
	Develop Building Safety Case for each HRRB	Apr-24	Completed	All information now collated, apart from remedial plan for External Wall System	Fire Engineer to finalise specification, to include in wider refurbishment programme, including windows programme. The above is part of the high-rise improvement plan project. Likely to be split into two parts – we are hoping to move forward on flat front entrance fire doors and cross corridor communal doors this year.
	Building Assessment Certificates		Ongoing	- Safety case submissions for Brent Court and Harrow Court have not yet received approval from the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). - The remaining three buildings have received formal notice from the BSR, with submissions expected between July 2025 and March 2026.	- Following the outcome for Brent and Harrow, we have engaged Vemco Consultancy to support the next phase. - Vemco is currently revising the safety cases and coordinating additional strategies and surveys to support compliance with BSR requirements.

5	Develop Building Safety Policy	June-23	Completed	Final Draft of Policy now completed and signed off.	Agreed Exec 14 th June 2023.
6	Update Fire Safety Policy to include new legislation and best practice	June-23	Completed	Final Draft of Policy now completed and signed off.	Agreed November 2023
7	External Wall Surveys	July-23	Completed	All surveys completed of external wall systems	
8	Implement Fire Risk Assessment Prioritisation Tool	April-23	Completed	FRA Programme uploaded into Prioritisation Tool, confirmed that all FRA frequencies and types are correct	
No	Workstream Description	Deadline	Status	Current Position	Next Action
9	Install New Secure Information Boxes	April-23	Completed	New SIBs installed in all HRRBs	
10	Information Refresh for Info Boxes	April-23	Completed	Produce added information including floors plans, vulnerability list, and all keys to communal / service cupboard doors	Fire & Rescue Service confirmed that they are happy with all information.
11	Update Servicing Intervals for all Fire Safety Assets in HRRBs	April-23	Completed	Increase servicing for AOV, s Fire Alarms, Dry Risers in all HRRBs to a monthly frequency	
12	Update Signage and Wayfinding Signs	Oct-23	Completed	The five high rises have had all signage and wayfinding updated and works complete.	This is now completed
13	Develop Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy Develop a way of engaging with residents to seek their view on planned improvements to fire safety	Oct-23	Ongoing	Policy has been written and currently being publicised.	The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) has provided feedback on elements of the existing residential strategy. Vemco Consultancy is currently revising the strategy as part of the broader Building Safety Case (BSC) work. The updated strategy documents will be redistributed once they have been reviewed and approved.
14	Resident Communications	Oct-23	Ongoing		
	Develop Site Specific comms for resident onboarding.			completed	Given to lettings Team
	Re-Use Site Specific comms for annual update	Feb-26		Completed until February 2026	Regulation 9/10 Letters Re -sent in February 2025 with additional compliance safety info – to include gas/electric/water safety information.

					SBC website also has this information on it building safety pages.
	Develop process with Lettings Team to ensure all new residents receive building safety advice on lettings.			Outline process agreed with Lettings Team	Finalise and document process, ensure evidence of issue and store signed receipt from residents. - Lettings team have been provided with building safety information to add into their letting's packs.
	High Rise Resident Engagement programme		On going	SBC employees have been engaging with residents	- Building Safety now have Building inspectors visiting all blocks of flats not just the High-Rise buildings. - Quarterly meetings have been booked in so residents can attend.
15	Fire Door Inspection Programme Quarterly inspection of all communal fire doors and annual inspection of Flat Entrance Doors.	April-23	Completed	Fire Door Inspection Programme started in October 22. RFID chips installed on all doors are part of initial inspection	Import data into Asset Management System.
	PCFRA / PEEP Training	Oct-23	Completed	Training and Templates delivered to all housing officers, in general needs and independent living schemes.	Service Delivery Managers to develop programme for PCFRAs on all ILS Residents and existing residents with known vulnerabilities.
	Repairs – Competent Contractor	Oct-23	Ongoing	Book workshop with Repairs Team to identify and develop skills matrix.	Identify which Fire Safety workstreams should be outsourced whilst training needs analysis and skills gap is identified. currently looking to set up specialist contracts - A procurement pipeline has been created. We are now progressing these to either framework agencies or looking to run our own
No	Workstream Description	Deadline	Status	Current Position	Next Action
18	Emergency Evacuation Alarms	Oct-23	Completed	Reviewed requirements with HFRS for existing HRRBs. Confirmed no requirement to retrofit.	Will be required for new 18m+ ILS Scheme at Brent Court.
No	Workstream Description	Deadline	Status	Current Position	Next Action
19	Provider Improvement Plan				

	Update Compliance Scorecard to include FRA remedial actions,	Dec 24	Complete	Scorecard updated and used for reporting	
	Updated Compliance Scorecard to include FRA remedial actions, and block mitigation update reported to EHWG each month and Cabinet on a quarterly basis.	Mar 25	In progress	Reported to EHWG from Nov 24 Now included in quarterly performance reporting to Cabinet. Q2 and Q3 reports (Dec 24 & Mar 25), mitigation assessment in development	
	Reported as part of Corporate H&S Group	Feb 25	Complete	Reported to Corporate Risk Group Feb 25	
	Purchase and utilise new compliance IT monitoring and reporting system.	End of Mar 25	In progress	System purchased, with data upload currently underway, this will be the sole compliance system	Data cleansing is ongoing – we are focusing on those properties which currently say no certificate is present and undertaking additional checks. - Discussion to be had about accepting historical certificates as correct and focusing on the new certs.
Page 232	Outstanding fire actions contract works underway, with work prioritised, this is to include new works and overdue works complete	End of September 25	In progress	Contractor Ventro, undertaking work, with monitoring in place	
	New FRA works contract procured and works plan underway to deal with identified actions	End of September 25	In progress	Fire remedial actions tender is now live with Fusion 21	We expect this to be scored and awarded by end of September 2025
	Replacement door programme for high rise flat front and cross corridors completed	Mid 26	In progress	Gerda door contract has been awarded. Installation will start as soon as Building Control certification is received from BSR, but this can take up to 21 weeks from submission. However, doors have or are being manufactured and stored ready for installation as soon as possible, this work programme will continue into 2026.	We are meeting with Part B soon to discuss the submission for a BC notice. - The consultants are being chased weekly to complete this application – there have been delays due to additional information being required.
	General fire door repair and replacement programme in place	September 25	In progress	Currently with SBC Procurement team	Tender is written; we are awaiting legal sign off for the contracts then we can proceed with running the procurement. Expected to be out by end of September.
	Lifesaving equipment service in place		In progress	Looking at alternative options	Alternative procurement options are being explored due to excessive costs associated with current return rates.

					Considerations include incorporating the service into a new contract or seeking competitive quotes via In-Tend. Existing contractors remain available and can be utilised where appropriate.
	New electrical testing and servicing arrangements in place	End of March 25	Completed		Procurement has been completed, DPIA agreed. Waiting on legal to approve contract, but we can start with the works.
	High-Rise Resident Engagement Strategy published.	March 25	Completed	The strategy has been developed and published, has been circulated.	
	Annual Section 9 and 10 letters providing building safety advice to be sent	End of Feb 25	Complete	The section 9&10 letters have been sent to all applicable residents on the 7th of February 2025, the letter also included additional general compliance information to the residents. This information will also be promoted online, through social media and within schemes, and included within updated included in lettings packs.	
Page 233	Monitoring and information on the installation of CO and smoke alarms to be through new compliance IT system	End of September 25	In progress	Data upload to new system underway, this is including data cleansing, matching and allocation.	
	Initial new reporting and monitoring data system in place	End of Apr 25	Not started		
	Data quality and integrity checks and reviews completed to provide improved assurance	Jun 25	Not started		
	3rd Party Assurance system in place through EICR and LSGR provision	Jun 25	In progress	In place as part of LSGR regime and being updated for EIC	
No	Workstream Description	Deadline	Status	Current Position	Next Action
20	UK Government Response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report				
	Recommendation 2: That the definition of a higher-risk building for the purposes of the Building Safety Act be reviewed urgently. (113.7)	TBC	Awaiting guidance	- This will potentially bring in buildings over 11m into the “higher Risk building” category - This would be approximately 14 flat blocks for SBC	
	Recommendation 5: That the statutory guidance, and Approved Document B in particular, be reviewed accordingly and a	TBC	Awaiting guidance	- No action from SBC but may affect future works	

	revised version published as soon as possible. (113.11)				
	Recommendation 6: That a revised version of the guidance contain a clear warning in each section that the legal requirements are contained in the Building Regulations and that compliance with the guidance will not necessarily result in compliance with them.	TBC	Awaiting guidance	- No action from SBC but may affect future works	
	Recommendation 7: New materials and methods of construction and the practice of over cladding existing buildings make the existence of effective compartmentation a questionable assumption and we recommend that it be reconsidered when Approved Document B is revised.	TBC	Awaiting guidance	- No action from SBC but may affect future works	
Page 234	Recommendation 10: That it be made a statutory requirement that a fire safety strategy produced by a registered fire engineer to be submitted with building control applications (at Gateway 2) for the construction or refurbishment of any higher-risk building and for it to be reviewed and re-submitted at the stage of completion (Gateway 3). Such a strategy must consider the needs of vulnerable people, including the additional time they may require to leave the building or reach a place of safety within it and any additional facilities necessary to ensure their safety.		In progress	- SBC will need to have fire strategy written by registered fire engineer – these are being done with the current gateway applications for works on the high-rise building	
	Recommendation 11: Assessing whether an external wall system can support a particular evacuation strategy is difficult because the necessary information is not		Awaiting guidance	No action from SBC but may affect future works	

	always available. We therefore recommend that steps be taken in conjunction with the professional and academic community to develop new test methods that will provide the information needed for such assessments to be carried out reliably				
	Recommendation 12: BS 9414 should be approached with caution, and we recommend that the government make it clear that it should not be used as a substitute for an assessment by a suitably qualified fire engineer. (113.18)		Awaiting guidance	No action from SBC but may affect future works	
Page 235	Recommendation 20: That it be made a statutory requirement that an application for building control approval in relation to the construction or refurbishment of a higher risk building (Gateway 2) be supported by a statement from a senior manager of the principal designer under the Building Safety Act 2022 that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that on completion the building as designed will be as safe as is required by the Building Regulations.		Awaiting guidance	- SBC will need to be aware of this if/when it is passed. It will be done as part of the Gateway 2 application.	
	Recommendation 21: That a licensing scheme operated by the construction regulator be introduced for principal contractors wishing to undertake the construction or refurbishment of higher-risk buildings and that it be a legal requirement that any application for building control approval for the construction or refurbishment of a higher risk building (Gateway 2) be		Awaiting guidance	No action from SBC but may affect future works as we will need to make sure all principal contractors have the relevant qualifications to work on our buildings.	

	supported by a personal undertaking from a director or senior manager of the principal contractor to take all reasonable care to ensure that on completion and handover the building is as safe as is required by the Building Regulations.				
	Recommendation 28: That every gas transporter be required by law to check the accessibility of each [pipeline isolation] valve on its system at least once every three years and to report the results of that inspection to the Health and Safety Executive as part of its gas safety case review. (113.44)		Awaiting guidance	No action from SBC but may affect future works	
Page 236	Recommendation 47: That local resilience forums adopt national standards to ensure effective training, preparation and planning for emergencies and adopt independent auditing schemes to identify deficiencies and secure compliance.	Dec 25	In Progress	SBC have already set out a training matrix for resilience and started work to implement this. Two cohorts of gold and silver training have been delivered to SLT and 4 th tier officers. It has also been agreed that all staff will undertake emergency awareness training.	A National Qualifications Framework will be introduced by the government. We will review this when it is launched and ensure our training matrix is aligned to this.
	Recommendation 48: That a mechanism be introduced for independently verifying the frequency and quality of training provided by local authorities and other Category 1 responders.	Ongoing	Awaiting guidance	We continue to wait for updates from the government on this recommendation.	The government will be updating the National Resilience Standards which will set out these expectations. Once these have been released, we will review our requirements and take appropriate steps to ensure we are in line with the standards.
	Recommendation 49: That local authorities train all their employees, including chief executives, to regard resilience as an integral part of their responsibilities.	Dec 25	In Progress	See update for Recommendation 47.	
	Recommendation 50: RBKC had no effective means of collecting and recording information about those who	Feb 26	Planned	A review of our reception centres and our support for displaced individuals will be undertaken in Autumn 25. This will include	The government will also be releasing guidance for local councils that will clarify the key duties.

	had been displaced from the tower and surrounding buildings, including those who were missing. Compiling reliable information of that kind is difficult and the challenges likely to be faced by local authority Category 1 responders will vary according to the nature of the emergency. We recommend that all local authorities devise methods of obtaining and recording information of that kind, if possible, in electronic form, and practise putting them into operation under a variety of different circumstances			a review of the processes to collect and capture information. We will also be introducing digital processes to our reception centre plans as part of this project.	When this is released, we will ensure our processes align to this.
Page 237	Recommendation 51: That all local authorities make such arrangements as are reasonably practicable for enabling them to place people in temporary accommodation at short notice and in ways that meet their personal, religious, and cultural requirements. Such arrangements should, as far as possible, involve local providers of social housing.	Mar 26	Ongoing	Existing processes are in place to house individuals into temporary accommodation, and these can be used in the event of an incident. The accommodation that could be used would be hotels, empty temporary accommodation units (likely to be limited) available units in general needs.	A Further action is to link with neighbouring districts to share information on the availability of accommodation in the local area and the key contacts for this
	Recommendation 52: That all local authorities include in their contingency plans arrangements for providing immediate financial assistance to people affected by an emergency.	Ongoing	Awaiting guidance	This requirement is being reviewed across Hertfordshire via a working group to establish a uniform approach to financial support.	The government has committed to working with local authorities and the LGA to understand how this would integrate with local plans and, where appropriate, help determine the nature of financial support required.
	Recommendation 53: That as part of their planning for emergencies local authorities consider the availability of key workers and the role, they are expected to play so that suitable contingency arrangements can be made to ensure, as far as possible, continuity of support.	Ongoing	Awaiting guidance	The councils Emergency plan sets out the allocation of resources in the event of an emergency and Business Continuity Plans are in place to set out how services respond in the event of any incidents.	

	Recommendation 54: That as part of their emergency planning local authorities make effective arrangements for continuing communication with those who need assistance using the most suitable technology and a range of languages appropriate to the area.	Mar 25	Awaiting guidance	This will be reviewed as part of a review of reception centres. There are existing communication plans in place for emergency planning, and this continues to evolve to make use of modern technology.	
	Recommendation 55: That all local authorities include in their plans for responding to emergencies arrangements for providing information to the public by whatever combination of modern methods of communication are likely to be most effective for the areas for which they are responsible.	Mar 25	Awaiting guidance	This will also be review in line with the above.	

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